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THE

FALSE FRIEND:

A DOMESTIC STORY.

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THE

FALSE FRIEND.

LETTER XXX.

GERTRUDE *to* FRANCES.

Brighthelmſtone, Sept. 12, 1796.

ON our arrival at the ball, we were met by the maſter of the ceremonies, with that unaffected politeneſs which characterizes his manners. He led the Ducheſs to the upper end of the room, and placing me near her, entered into the moſt intelligent and lively converſation. We were ſoon joined by Mr. Treville, who, taking his ſeat next to mine, began to make various comments

on the company; among whom I ſoon diſcovered Lord and Lady Melcomb, Sir Hector and Lady Upas; and before I could compoſe my features to a reſiſting ſerenity, I obſerved Miſs Cecil haſtening towards us with a commanding effrontery.

The Ducheſs, perceiving my cheek redden with reſentment, which excited a ſmile from Mr. Treville, deſired me not to diſcompoſe my ſpirits. "Take no notice of the bold girl," ſaid her Grace, "and we will ſoon find an opportunity to avoid her." Mr. Treville's eyes ſeemed rivetted on mine.

"Your ſilver muſlin becomes you wonderfully," ſaid he; "and I dare believe that, eſtimating the gift by the virtues of the giver, you value it as it deſerves. But beauty needs not 'the foreign aid of ornament." I began to grow uneaſy almoſt beyond my patience, when

when Miſs Cecil calmly inquired, "what was the matter, and why I looked ſo diſcontented?"

I roſe abruptly, and took my place at ſome diſtance, next to Lady Upas. "I did not join your party," ſaid ſhe, "becauſe I cannot endure Miſs Cecil's ſociety." Sir Hector edged himſelf a few ſeats lower, while Lady Upas and I entered into converſation. We had not talked a quarter of an hour, when a ſtranger entered the room. Her perſon was what might be called pretty, and her countenance rather expreſſive. She wore a robe of white ſarſnet; a brilliant ſtar glittered on the front of her zone, and her hair was fancifully decorated with a wreath of laurel. I obſerved that every perſon greeted her with reſpect; and a buzzing whiſper went almoſt inſtantaneouſly round the circle. The Lady was accompanied by a little

boy, whoſe head was bound with roſes; and three elegant young women, who entered with her, wore a green gauze uniform, ſpangled with ſilver: theſe were the Graces of the group. On their heads they diſplayed helmets of black velvet; emblematically deſigned to mark the wiſdom of Minerva, with the beauty of Venus. On their left ſide they exhibited that plume which the illuſtrious Edward I. obtained in the field of valour, and which is now frequently blazoned, in wood, in all the ſtreets of the metropolis. This fantaſtic party ſoon joined the dancers. Lord Melcomb took the Lyric muſe as a partner, while Sir Hector, for once in his life, exhibited a Grace as his companion.

The ſingularity in the dreſſes and manners of the group arreſted every eye, as they moved with laboured elegance down

down the dance. My curioſity was awakened, and I eagerly inquired of Lady Upas, if ſhe knew them.

"O, yes!" ſaid ſhe: "they never fail to viſit Brighthelmſtone every ſummer. The muſe is the Honourable Mrs. Orient, an exalted literary character; if compoſing a few 'lucid gems,' or 'pearls of Helicon,' can afford a claim to that illuſtrious title."

"Is the acquirement of literary fame ſo eaſy?" ſaid I.

Lady Upas ſmiled. "Yes; when Fortune is the handmaid of Ambition," anſwered ſhe, "the laurel may be purchaſed, if the wearer will pay a liberal price for it. The lady whom you now ſee before you is celebrated for the profuſion of her wealth, though ſhe had never been diſtinguiſhed as the patroneſs of genius."

"How have her works obtained celebrity?" ſaid I.

"By the aid of venal commendation," replied Lady Upas. "The Lady always wrote on gilt paper; her language was perſuaſive; her admirers liberal; and her notes ſuch as every criticiſer of modern productions perfectly underſtood."

I liſtened with aſtoniſhment. "Is fame then an object of traffic?" ſaid I. "Is it to be obtained by private intereſt, inſtead of public opinion?"

"Too frequently," ſighed Lady Upas. "The laurel, like the order of chivalry, has often adorned thoſe who diſgraced its conſequence: hence have many been honoured with a red ribband, which bluſhes a reflection on the heart that wears it."

We now obſerved a handſome woman, who had only a few minutes before entered the room, with a look of ſilent contempt, quitting the circle. Her dreſs was plain and unaffected. "That

Lady,"

Lady," ſaid my amiable commentator, "is *really* a woman of genius; ſhe has written a variety of enlightened and ingenious works, and yet, with all her talents, beauty, and celebrity, ſhe reſides in an obſcure lodging, far above the proud, and not beneath the higheſt. Herſelf and her cat compoſe the whole of her eſtabliſhment; and ſhe has frequently been ſeen, while folly, ignorance, and pride rattled along the buſy ſtreets in indolence and luxury, meaſuring the pavement for exerciſe and health, in pattens and black ſtockings."

"Is it poſſible!" ſaid I. "Can the world be inſenſible to the claims of genius? But I have heard that talents are ſeldom rewarded till the tomb has blunted the arrows of detraction."

"There have been inſtances," ſaid Lady Upas, "to the contrary. But patronage is an oſtentatious phantom; which, with the roſy wreath it gives,

beſtows alſo many a thorn, to wound the boſom of genius!"

Lord Melcomb, who had left the Muſe, to drink, not of the Piërian ſpring, but of that beverage which is mingled with the tears, and even the blood of our fellow-creatures, now haſtened towards us; and, bowing to Lady Upas, inquired, "why ſhe did not take a partner."

"In truth, my Lord, I have long been weary of one," replied her Ladyſhip; "for mine is not one of the celeſtials; he is a mere earthly creature."

"And yet," cried Lord Melcomb, "his being united to ſuch a woman ſhould render him immortal."

"Would to Heaven he were!" ſighed Lady Upas.

"No man is ſo much envied," continued Lord Melcomb.

"Who

"Who talks of envy, and at the ſame time addreſſes Lady Upas?" inquired Mr. Treville. "She bears a charmed motto: *Virtus vincit invidium.*" This affected compliment was accompanied with a bow, and a ſanctity of look that was perfectly ridiculous. Lord Melcomb burſt into a loud fit of laughter, in which he was ſuddenly checked by the voice of his domeſtic companion, who, frowning on me, and glancing indignantly at Lady Upas, commanded her lord and maſter to "leave off talking nonſenſe, and to call her carriage." The abaſhed huſband ſighed, and inſtantly obeyed.

"How truly valuable is domeſtic affection!" exclaimed Mr. Treville.

"Moſt things that are ſcarce, are ſo," cried Lady Upas.

"You are cynically ſevere," ſaid the Divine. "When I marry, I will ſet an example worthy of imitation."

"Then I dare ſwear," cried her Ladyſhip, "that, like the works of ſome modern artiſts, the copy will bear no reſemblance to the original."

Miſs Cecil now ſauntered towards us: I took my leave of Lady Upas, and returned to the amiable Ducheſs, who ſoon after propoſed departing.

Mr. Treville conducted us to the carriage; and we haſtened home, to ſup with Lord and Lady Denmore: an event which took place on our way thither ſhall be the ſubject of my next letter.—Adieu.

LETTER XXXI

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 14, 1796.

MR. Treville had ſcarcely quitted the door, when a chariot with rich liveries, driving furiouſly againſt us, overſet our carriage with a craſh that was terrific. The Ducheſs, as ſoon as ſhe recovered from her alarm, ſufficiently to ſpeak, inquired whether I was hurt, and called anxiouſly for aſſiſtance. The ſound of her voice inſpired me with courage, and I faintly replied, that I "believed my arm was broken."

A crowd aſſembled, ſeveral perſons aſſiſted us in getting out of the carriage, among others the owner of that which had overſet us, who humanely remarked, that it was "only an old girl with her head where her heels ſhould be, and

conſequently not worth the trouble of waiting for." He was returning to the rooms, when one of his companions exclaimed, "By Jupiter! But you are miſtaken."

Lights being brought, and held over the carriage, he continued: "D—me if here is not a young thing, as handſome as an angel! Curſe my ſtupid head, for not ſeeing her ſooner!"

"Come along," ſaid his friend; "I tell you it is only the old Ducheſs of Aldborough."

"The Devil a bit," exclaimed the companion. Then taking my hand he continued: "D—me, if this is not an adventure worthy of Don Quixote. Here are lilies and roſes, and ſparkling eyes, and vermilion lips. Come my pretty rogue; d—me, don't be afraid of me; d—me, I'm honeſt George Halbert, and d—me if any body ſhall inſult you, while you are under my protection."

tection." There was a frank roughneſs in his words which gave me confidence. I leant on his arm, and with ſome difficulty raiſed myſelf, while one aſſiſting effort from my gallant knight-errant releaſed me from captivity.

My anxiety was now awakened for the ſafety of the Ducheſs; and my joy was infinite, when I found that ſhe was ſtanding near me unhurt, and not much frightened.

"For your ſake, my dear child, I was alarmed," ſaid ſhe; "but ſince you are ſafe, my fears are at an end." The crowd diſperſed; we ſoon procured chairs, and after making a thouſand acknowledgments to Colonel Halbert, we once more ſet out for our lodgings.

My arm being much hurt and extremely painful, the motion of the chair was ſcarcely ſupportable. I let down the front glaſs, and deſired the chairman to walk ſlow, and to ſwing the poles

as

as gently as poſſible. I was fearful that my arm was broken, from the excruciating agony which I experienced, when a thought occurred that by going inſtantly to a ſurgeon, I might aſcertain the extent of my misfortune, without diſtreſſing the family by unneceſſary apprehenſions. I inquired of the chairman if there was ſuch aſſiſtance at hand; they replied, that "within fifty yards there was as good a ſurgeon as ever lopped off a limb, and one that would make no more of the job, than of cutting one of his poles aſunder." I requeſted them to haſten thither as faſt as they poſſibly could, without endangering my ſafety; and in a few minutes I was ſet down in the paſſage.

I aſcended to a drawing-room, where I was requeſted to wait a few minutes; the pain in my arm augmented every moment, and at length became ſcarcely ſupportable. I began to grow impatient,

tient, and finding no perſon came to my aſſiſtance, I repeatedly rung the bell violently. After I had waited near a quarter of an hour the door was opened, and Mr. Treville entered the room.

"I am extremely fortunate, Miſs St. Leger," ſaid he, "in having the power to render you ſome ſervice. A ſurgeon will be here preſently; but in the mean time, I truſt that you will permit me to profit by this propitious event, and to aſſure you how devotedly I am your friend and your adorer."

"This abſurd declaration is both barbarous and inſulting, at a time when I am agonized almoſt beyond bearing," anſwered I. "The motive of my ſtopping at this houſe was to obtain ſome aſſiſtance; for, I have reaſon to believe, that my arm is broken."

"So is my heart, beautiful Gertrude!" interrupted Mr. Treville. "And it reſts alone with you, whether or not the misfortune

misfortune is incurable. I have only a few moments to repeat to you a volume of aſſurances, that I am devoted to your happineſs,—the ſlave of your perſonal charms,—the idolator of your mental perfections." I was now proceeding towards the door, when he ſnatched my hand, and throwing himſelf on his knee, conjured me but to hear him.

"I have heard enough already," ſaid I. "Neither do I think that it is prudent to remain in this houſe, which, I begin to fear, is not what I believed it."

"This houſe is Mrs. Blonzely's," ſaid Mr. Treville; at the ſame time locking the door, and putting the key into his pocket. My reſentment grew ſtrong, in proportion to the inſult I experienced; and, with a firm voice, accompanied by a look of ſtern diſdain, I demanded my immediate liberty. Mr. Treville roſe from his ſupplicating poſture, and, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, replied:

"How

"How can you make ſo ridiculous a requeſt? Do you ſuppoſe me ſuch a novice in the arcanum of love, that I will permit your departure, without ſome token of future favour? I heard you order the chairmen to conduct you where you might obtain aſſiſtance. I availed myſelf of your command, and, paſſing unſeen by you, deſired them to follow. The diſcovery made by Miſs Cecil convinces me that this is not the firſt time you have been under the roof of Mrs. Blonzely's habitation; and therefore all abſurd prudery is unneceſſary. Denmore will never know it; and you have little to fear from the jealouſy of any other perſon."

I now rung the bell violently, but nobody anſwered it. I heard voices in a back room, only divided from that in which I was a priſoner, by a cloſet of communication; I tried the lock; it was faſtened on the other ſide. I knocked

knocked vehemently, and preſently heard a female voice inquire what was the matter.

"I am confined," ſaid I. "For Heaven's ſake, open the door." Mr. Treville caught me in his arms, and endeavoured to prevent my ſpeaking by holding his handkerchief before my mouth. By an effort of ſtrength as well as fortitude, I got free from his graſp, and again called loudly to the perſons in the adjoining chamber.

"Who are you?" inquired the female.

"Open the door, and you will ſee," ſaid I.

I now heard her exclaim, "By all that is wonderful, it is her voice! I know it; I could ſwear to it."

"You are mad," ſaid Mr. Treville in a whiſper, at the ſame time pulling me from the door. "You know not what you are doing. Your reputation

and

and mine will both ſuffer by this ill-judging frenzy."

"The room ſhall be unlocked," ſaid the female; and preſently I heard the key turning: Mr. Treville was retreating precipitately towards the other entrance, when the door was thrown wide open, and I beheld Miſs Cecil with Sir Hector Upas.

"I give you joy of this honourable event," ſaid ſhe, ſmiling malignantly.

"The honour is equal to both parties," anſwered I. "The only difference, I believe, was in the inclination to obtain it. At all events, madam, I have to thank you for my liberty." Mr. Treville was confuſed and ſilent; Miſs Cecil furiouſly enraged; and Sir Hector loſt in aſtoniſhment.

"As this adventure will make ſome noiſe, for I do not rely on your ſecrecy," ſaid Miſs Cecil, "you may depend on my reporting it properly. Sir Hector

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can witneſs, that we both came hither to detect you and Mr. Treville; the aſſignation was diſcovered by a confidential friend; and it has happened exactly as it was reported."

"By whom?" ſaid I.

"By Lady Upas," replied Miſs Cecil. "Was it not, Sir Hector?"

"Preciſely ſo," cried the nabob.

"The falſehood of ſuch an aſſertion convinces me that Lady Upas never could have made it," ſaid I. "But, in order to aſcertain the fact, we will ſend for her Ladyſhip without delay." I rung the bell.

"This is prodigiouſly imprudent," exclaimed Sir Hector. "My Lady enjoined me to ſecrecy, and ſhe will be both angry and aſtoniſhed."

"I do not queſtion it," anſwered I; "but I will not tamely bear ſo infamous a ſlander."

"Wretch!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed Miſs Cecil, addreſſing Mr. Treville, while her eyes ſeemed to dart the lightnings of revenge, "this infidelity has for ever put a period to my affection; Sir Hector ſhall no longer have the mortification of knowing, that I debaſed my mind, by feeling a partiality for ſuch a coxcomb."

"Gentle Emma!" replied Mr. Treville, "calm your reſentful rage; and know, that I accept my diſmiſſion with the moſt heartfelt delight. I take my leave, from this hour, moſt joyfully; and I congratulate Sir Hector on the purity and ſplendour of his conqueſt. The honours which you have thought fit to confer on me ſhall be remembered with gratitude; and I truſt that the ſanctity of my character will ſet even a woman's malice at defiance."

"Infamous monſter!" muttered Miſs Cecil. Then, turning to Sir Hector, ſhe continued: "I am ready to depart."

"This

"This is prodigiouſly unlucky!" ſaid Sir Hector, leading the enraged Miſs Cecil out of the room. I now heard a vehement knocking at the ſtreet-door; and preſently after, on its being opened, the voice of Lord Denmore almoſt ſtruck me ſenſeleſs.

"She is in this houſe," ſaid he: "the chairmen who brought her hither have given me intelligence of her being entrapped by ſome unknown ſcoundrel." At this moment Sir Hector reached the paſſage.

"O! is it you, Sir Hector?" continued my guardian. "Is it you who dare inſult the innocence of a defenceleſs girl? I inſiſt that you do not ſtir from this houſe till you have ſatisfied my reſentment. I will ſecure the ſafety of Miſs St. Leger, and then we will decide the buſineſs."

Mr. Treville now deſcended haſtily. "My dear friend!" ſaid he, meeting Lord

Lord Denmore; "thank Heaven you are arrived, to aid me in ſnatching the charming Gertrude from that old ſon of iniquity. Paſſing from the rooms when the Ducheſs's carriage was overturned, I obſerved Miſs St. Leger getting into a chair; and, ſeeing no ſervant with her, I reſolved to be her protector acroſs the Steine; when, to my utter aſtoniſhment, I found the chairmen haſtening hither, with their fair charge; I followed, and, on my arrival, diſcovered her in the drawing-room a priſoner, forcibly detained by Sir Hector Upas."

"Prodigious!" exclaimed Sir Hector, aſtoniſhed at the volubility and effrontery with which Mr. Treville exculpated his own conduct, by accuſing him.

"There is not a word of truth in all that he has ſaid," cried Sir Hector.

"You know I am incapable of uttering a falſehood," cried Mr. Treville.

"The

"The omnipotence of truth is my ſhield, and it is, I thank Heaven, untarniſhed."

"I believe you, my friend," ſaid Lord Denmore: "I believe you. Say no more on the ſubject, I conjure you. The caſe is evident—it wants no proof. I am thankful for your kindneſs: Gertrude alſo ſhall be thankful. But as for you, Sir Hector, I ſhall talk to you to-morrow morning. I know your habitation, and ſhall expect to find you there at eight o'clock." During this arrangement, Miſs Cecil never once ventured to appear. I was mute with conſternation, and nearly overcome by terror, at Lord Denmore's decided tone and manner. I conjured him to be patient till I could recover my ſpirits; with a promiſe that I would then make him acquainted with the whole circumſtance, of which he had heard an erroneous account, fabricated by art, and

repeated by the aid of an effrontery, ſcarcely to be equalled.

"I know Sir Hector to be the moſt arrogant and preſuming of mortals," replied my guardian. "The folly of his conduct now becomes criminal; I would have pardoned the oſtentation of an eaſtern deſpot, but the undermining arts of a domeſtic traitor I muſt reſolve to puniſh." So ſaying, he hurried me out of the houſe, led me to a chair which was waiting by his previous order, and we proceeded towards home, equally perplexed by the events of the evening.

On our arrival we found the Ducheſs and Lady Denmore expecting us with anxious ſolicitude. My guardian's countenance betrayed the perturbation of his mind, as he entered the ſupper-room. Lady Denmore's ſuſpicion was awakened: ſhe looked ſtedfaſtly at me, then at her huſband. Her colour changed;—ſhe attempted to ſpeak; but

her powers of articulation failed, and ſhe threw herſelf upon the ſofa overwhelmed with agitation.

Supper was ſerved; but the meal was concluded in ſilence. The Ducheſs trembled and looked fearful that I was in error. Lady Denmore became pale and red by turns, as the contending emotions of doubt and reſentment predominated in her mind. Lord Denmore taſted not a morſel; and I ſat mute, though in excruciating torture; my wriſt being ſprained, and my arm bruiſed violently; but I had not reſolution to leave the room, even for a moment, leſt in the interim Miſs Cecil ſhould arrive with a new tale of falſehood.

As ſoon as the ſervants quitted the apartment, my guardian thus addreſſed Lady Denmore: "I perceive the uneaſineſs which poſſeſſes your mind; and with regret I confeſs,

feſs, that appearances are againſt us. But I truſt that the knowledge of what has really paſſed will tranquillize your inquietude, and at the ſame time exculpate Miſs St. Leger from every injurious ſuſpicion." I ſighed deeply. Lady Denmore ſettled her features to a conſtrained and ſceptical compoſure. The Ducheſs requeſted my guardian to proceed; and, in as few words as poſſible, the ſtory was repeated even to the minuteſt circumſtance; omitting only the meeting which Lord Denmore meditated with Sir Hector on the following morning.

"This may be true," ſaid Lady Denmore; "though it bears ſtrong marks of improbability. But, ſince it is hereſy to queſtion Miſs St. Leger's veracity, I muſt even be content, however doubtful I may feel upon the ſubject."

Lord Denmore having concluded what he thought the hiſtory of the

night's adventures, I begged leave to ſpeak. "All which you have heard," ſaid I, "is an erroneous ſtatement."

Lady Denmore ſeemed to exult at the declaration. The Ducheſs looked aſtoniſhed. My guardian fixed his eyes on me, with no leſs amazement than apprehenſion, and exclaimed: "What do you mean child? are you frantic?"

I bowed my head reſpectfully. "My Lord," ſaid I, "you have deceived Lady Denmore; I cannot ſuffer her to be the dupe of a diſſembling libertine."

"Speak briefly," ſaid Lady Denmore with augmented inquietude. "I am eager to hear *your* ſtory, and I make no doubt but it will be equally ingenious, in plot and decoration, with that which I have already heard. Lord Denmore was to blame to repeat his tale of improbabilities without a prompter."

"I am

"I am above deceit, Lady Denmore," interrupted I. At this moment the ſervant announced Miſs Cecil. "But here comes one, who will, with all her malice, by truth acquit me: for it will be both her intereſt and her pleaſure, for once in her life, to act with candour." Miſs Cecil now ruſhed into the room.

"I came hither," ſaid ſhe, almoſt ſuffocated with rage, "to vindicate Sir Hector Upas, whom Lord Denmore has thought proper to accuſe of treachery and inſult towards Miſs St. Leger; though I am ſorry, that juſtice towards one object ſhould compel me to criminate another; for my greateſt enemy cannot accuſe me of ill-nature."

Lady Denmore grew more and more agitated every moment. The Ducheſs ſhook her head and ſmiled, as Miſs Cecil proceeded.

"The perſon whom we found locked up with the *innocent* Gertude was one

who, to the character of a fawning hypocrite, adds that of a domeſtic aſſaſſin. No perſon can ſay that I am of a revengeful temper; but where the reputation of a friend and the happineſs of his wife are at ſtake, I cannot remain ſilent."

"Go on," ſaid Lady Denmore: "I conjure you to go on; I am all impatience."

"Then," continued Miſs Cecil, looking ſignificantly at my guardian, "it was not Sir Hector Upas who came, by aſſignation, to meet Miſs St. Leger at Mrs. Blonzely's." Lady Denmore ſtarted abruptly from the ſofa. "You may tremble, deceitful girl," ſaid ſhe, turning towards me; "but I will now act deciſively." My guardian roſe, and was preparing to ſpeak. "My Lord," continued ſhe, "I inſiſt on your obſerving ſilence. Miſs St. Leger's powers are equal to the part ſhe plays, and ſhe,

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at leaſt, requires no prompting." Lord Denmore ſmiled, and reſumed his ſeat; while Miſs Cecil, with a conſequential preciſion, went on with her ſtory.

"The favoured, happy, envied lover, whom Miſs St. Leger had ſelected for her well-arranged and boldly-executed interview, was Mr. Treville."

Lady Denmore turned pale; and, leaning on the Ducheſs's ſhoulder, nearly fainted. Miſs Cecil ſilently exulted.

I now begged permiſſion, in my turn, to be heard. "My conduct requires no extenuation," ſaid I, "becauſe I am guilty of no crime." I then candidly and exactly related the whole adventure: but the variety of reports bewildered every hearer, excepting Miſs Cecil; and I was mortified to perceive that my guardian ſtill conſidered Sir Hector as the offender, and Mr. Treville as the ſlandered perſon. Lady Denmore, un-

able to ſupport her ſpirits under the ſhock they had a ſecond time received, retired to her dreſſing-room. The Duchеſs followed; and Miſs Cecil, wiſhing us all 'a pleaſant night,' departed.

I haſtened to my chamber, and paſſed the hours till day-break in the moſt agonizing ſtate of mind. To this was added the pain which my accident occaſioned; and before the ſun roſe, I was in a burning fever. Finding that it was impoſſible to ſleep under ſuch a combination of bodily and mental tortures, I roſe early, and dreſſing myſelf, opened my window to inhale the ſea-breezes, and to watch whether my guardian quitted the houſe, to meet Sir Hector. I had not been half an hour upon my poſt of anxiety, when I ſaw the nabob's chaiſe-and-four flying round the Steine, with almoſt incredible velocity. Sir Hector ſat in the corner alone; and I did not take my eyes from the horſes,

horſes, till they proceeded along the high road towards Preſton.

Convinced that Sir Hector had thought it prudent to quit Brighthelmſtone, my heart inſtantly ſeemed lightened of its load of ſolicitude; and throwing myſelf on my pillow, I fell into a ſound ſleep, from which I did not awake till I was ſummoned to breakfaſt.

I found Lady Denmore looking more than uſually pale; her eyes reddened by tears, and her lips parched by the fever of inquietude. My guardian ſat on the ſofa near her; a table, at which he had been writing, had two letters ſealed, and a taper ſtill burning, on it. The Ducheſs was making the tea when I entered the room: her hand ſhook violently, ſhe glanced a look at me, which ſpoke a volume of affection, blended with pity. I placed my chair near the table, and for many minutes not a word was uttered; though Lady Denmore's cheek

diſplayed frequent tears, my guardian's brows continued ſternly contracted, and the Ducheſs ſeemed overpowered by diſtreſs, which ſomething appertaining to myſelf evidently occaſioned. While we were ſitting ſilent, though buſily employed in thought, Mr. Treville made his appearance. He entered the room with the *ſang froid* of refined diſſimulation; diſplaying his white teeth by ſmiling, though he might have traced the ſolemnity of ſorrow in every other countenance.

"Sir Hector is off!" ſaid he; "abſolutely levanted! I truſt this will confirm my laſt night's ſtatement, and convince your Lordſhip, that I am the guiltleſs perſon; though I am heartily ſickened of doing good-natured actions, the world is ſo full of deception."

"It is indeed!" ſaid I, ſighing.

"Amiable moraliſt!" continued Mr. Treville, taking his chocolate with eaſy

non-

nonchalance, "I am perfectly of that opinion. Yet there is a ſecret pleaſure in riſking its cenſure, where the defence of virtue is the cauſe of our temerity; for with me *Malo mori quam fœdari* * is a decided maxim."

Lady Denmore roſe abruptly, and quitted the room. Mr. Treville took her ſeat, and continued: "Sir Hector's prudence is equal to his gallantry! I wiſh I could ſay that his valour was as brilliantly diſtinguiſhed. For my ſhare in the *fracas*, I can only rejoice in having been of ſervice to Miſs St. Leger, though at the expence of my own reputation."

"Can you call inſult and confinement under ſuch a roof as Mrs. Blonzely's, rendering me a ſervice?" ſaid I gravely.

"It is true, I detained you againſt your inclination," replied Mr. Treville;

* Death is preferable to diſhonour.

"but it was only till your chairmen could inform Lord Denmore of your danger: for, by my deſire, they communicated the event to his Lordſhip; thereby ſnatching you from the peril which menaced your character, and detecting Sir Hector in his infamous machinations. For this interference I am ſlandered, accuſed of hypocriſy, and ſtigmatized with the moſt unmerited epithets. But I muſt bear the injuries which 'patient merit from the unworthy takes,' and, wrapped in the ſecurity of conſcious honour, endure even the indignant glances of offended beauty. Yet, pardon me, amiable Gertrude, and believe that, had I known how poignantly you would feel the diſcovery, I ſhould have remained ſilent; even though my friendſhip and integrity would have been tarniſhed by my taciturnity."

"Treville,

"Treville, you have acted like a man of honour, and I thank you," cried Lord Denmore; "and if any thing could make me condemn Miſs St. Leger's conduct, it would be the obſtinate perſeverance with which ſhe accuſes one in whom I repoſe the moſt implicit confidence. I believe her innocent of any indiſcreet intention: I attribute the whole diabolical and preconcerted plan to that daſtardly libertine, whoſe abſence corroborates his guilt: and I requeſt, both of Miſs St. Leger and yourſelf, that here the affair may reſt. For it would cauſe me infinite chagrin, if the veracity of my fair *protegée*, or the honour of my friend, ſhould ſuffer the ſmalleſt imputation from deceptive circumſtances." I was preparing to ſpeak, when Lord Denmore interrupted me.

"I conjure you, I once more entreat you, to drop the ſubject. If you value either my eſteem or my good opinion, from

from this hour all that has paſſed will be buried in oblivion. You have miſinterpreted the motive of my friend; you have been deceived by appearances; and, if you are not determined to offend me, you will be ſilent."

"Yet hear me," ſaid I.

"Not a word, not even a ſyllable," replied my guardian. "The reputation of a man of honour muſt not be ſullied by a perſeverance in error, which now bears ſtrong traits of obſtinate calumny." So ſaying, he quitted the room with Mr. Treville; and I was left with the Ducheſs, who during the converſation had remained uniformly ſilent. On the door being ſhut, her eyes met mine.

"You have been deceived, Gertrude," ſaid ſhe. "Mr. Treville's conduct ſpeaks for itſelf; and nothing but Miſs Cecil's malice would attempt to pervert it. You muſt abſolutely obey Lord Denmore, by obſerving a diſcreet ſilence: conſider

conſider the ſacred function of his friend, and the rectitude of his character. This is not Miſs Cecil's firſt attempt to ſtigmatize Mr. Treville's reputation. The glaring falſehoods which ſhe uttered only yeſterday morning, and which ſhe ſuborned her *confidante*, Mrs. Blonzely, to corroborate, ought to convince you of her capability, where deceit and revenge are the ſecret ſprings of action. It is well known that Miſs Cecil has long directed all the artillery of her attractions againſt the heart of Mr. Treville. She now imagines that you are her rival; and the conſequence is natural to a mind artful and malignant. The enigma is ſo evident, that an *embecile* might ſolve it. Be open then to conviction; and truſt me, the candour of your boſom will be a ſource of conſcious pleaſure, when the prejudice which miſleads its feelings is vanquiſhed by reflection."

Perceiving

Perceiving that all my declarations had failed of obtaining credit, and that the refined artifice of my opponent had cloſed every avenue of conviction in the minds of my witneſſes, I reſolved to bear my defeat with all the meekneſs of reſignation. I therefore promiſed the Ducheſs I would from that hour be ſilent on the ſubject, on her as ſolemnly aſſuring me, that Miſs Cecil ſhould never again, by her preſence, either offend or inſult me. We ſhortly after prepared for a morning walk on the Steine; and my arm, being examined by a ſurgeon, with the aid of a ſling, was conſiderably eaſier. Lady Denmore remained in her chamber, and refuſed to be of our party. We were ſoon joined by my guardian and his 'honourable' friend, Mr. Treville, to the aſtoniſhment of the whole Steine, and to the unutterable mortification of the enraged Miſs Cecil.

This

This public diſplay of cordiality was the laſt *fineſſe* of the clerical Janus. He knew that the world judged every thing by appearances; and that no reaſoning mortal would ſuppoſe him guilty (for Miſs Cecil had been the whole morning employed in reporting the preceding night's occurrences) while he was countenanced by Lord Denmore, and ſanctioned by my ſociety. I was therefore, in order to fill the capacious meaſure of his vanity, dragged from library to library, from ſhop to ſhop, from the Steine to the Cliffs, and from the Cliffs to the cricket-ground, a walking certificate of Mr. Treville's reputation.

During our perambulations, every eye ſeemed to gaze with aſtoniſhment. "It cannot be," ſaid one. "It muſt have been a falſe report," cried another: "Well! for an unfaſhionable girl, her effrontery is aſtoniſhing," whiſpered a third.

third. "There are perhaps reaſons why Lord Denmore outfaces the world's opinion," intimated a fourth: while a fifth declared, that "it was a perfect enigma, and ought to be explained for the honour of nobility;" ſhrewdly adding, "theſe unbluſhing violations of public decency are growing intolerable! and this country ſeems marked, of all others, for the diſplay of indecorous exhibitions!" This obſervation came from the mouth of a venerable virgin; who, amidſt the perilous quickſands of faſhionable diſſipation, had preſerved the ſacred jewel Chaſtity till her fiftieth year, to the no ſmall entertainment of her ſarcaſtic aſſociates. She was now become a very bugbear in the regions of *haut ton*; a ſort of breathing phenomenon; an anti-diluvian non-deſcript, fit only to annihilate the nervous ſyſtem of thoſe who came within hearing of her exploded

exploded opinions, and to act on the imagination of modern ſenſibility, as a torpedo of the moſt petrifying nature.

The only perſon whom we met in our morning exhibition, that evinced the preſuming importance of a faſtidious delicacy, was Lady Melcomb. On our entering the Library, her glances would have conveyed the power of the baſiliſk, had not the ſhield of innocence repelled their magic. She looked me into univerſal obſervation; every eye obeyed the ſignal for a fixed gaze; and my confuſion covered my face with a crimſon hue, which ſeemed, to thoſe who were determined to condemn me, a proof of my indiſcretion. The Ducheſs did not obſerve the univerſal faſcination of eyes: ſhe approached Lady Melcomb with her uſual gentleneſs and affability: when her Ladyſhip, erecting her coarſe form, and taking the arm of her obedient Lord, exclaimed,

" Heaven

"Heaven forbid! that I ſhould be as blind as your Grace! I am not ſo eaſily taken in by appearances: the rank I hold in ſociety will not permit me to countenance a ſuſpected character, though ſanctioned even by your Grace's patronage." Lord Melcomb reddened to ſcarlet, aſhamed of his dignified aſſociate, and not daring to obſerve even the common civilities of good breeding either towards the Ducheſs or myſelf.

At dinner Lady Denmore again ſent her excuſes, complained of hyſterical ſymptoms, and requeſted that her phyſician might immediately be ſent for. My guardian wrote a ſhort note in obedience to her orders; and as ſoon as the deſſert was placed on the table, I retired to my chamber, where I have continued writing till the gloom of twilight obliges me to cloſe my letter.

It is impoſſible for me to anticipate a day of happineſs. A fatality ſeems to counteract

counteract every proſpect of gratification, which Hope ſometimes prompts me to encourage. When Lord Denmore is with me, I am tranquil; even though his frowns imply a ſilent diſapprobation of my conduct: and, alas! Frances, it has been my misfortune to ſeem, almoſt perpetually, in error, while my heart, my conſcious heart, ſighed for his approbation.—Adieu, but for a few days.

LETTER XXXII.

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 17, 1796.

EARLY on the morning after I wrote my laſt letter, I received a meſſage from Lord Denmore, briefly deſiring my immediate attendance in the drawing-room. I was ſcarcely dreſſed, when it

was

was conveyed to me; but, as the words came rather in the form of a command, than of a requeſt, with no ſmall degree of perturbation I obeyed the ſummons.

He advanced towards the door, as ſoon as I had opened it. His looks were mild and intereſting; his tone of voice gentle and perſuaſive. He led me to a chair, and, ſeating himſelf near me, after a pauſe of ſome moments, commenced the converſation.

"Gertrude," ſaid my guardian, looking earneſtly in my face, as if to read the diſpoſition of my mind, "will you once more forgive the injunctions of a friend, and promiſe to obey them?"

I bowed aſſent. He proceeded: "May I hope that the intereſt which I feel for your welfare will not be miſinterpreted? that the anxiety of a heart, devoted to your felicity, will be allowed to plead its zeal in extenuation of its wiſhes? In other words, may I expect that

that the requeſt which I am about to make will be complied with? not from a motive of complaiſance, or as a duty originating in paſt events; but as an acknowledgment of that regard which will never ceaſe to enſure, nay almoſt excluſively to command, my attention."

"I will endeavour to adopt your opinions, my Lord," ſaid I, "whatever penance they may inflict upon my feelings."

"Nay, Gertrude," interrupted my guardian, with a tone of chagrin which he could not ſtifle, "now your acquieſcence bears the ſemblance of conſtraint. Heaven forbid that I ſhould impoſe a painful taſk on one ſo ſenſitively organized." I ſighed.

"Alas! too ſenſitively for my own happineſs!" ſaid I. "But I await your commands, and ſhall be ambitious of obeying them, with the full conviction that

that they will be dictated by friendſhip, and authorized by reaſon."

Lord Denmore ſmiled. "Sweet girl!" ſaid he, how delicately does your mind diſcriminate; how eloquently does the language of your ſoul deſcribe its purity! Why, why do I exiſt, to witneſs ſuch perfections, without the power to reward them?" He roſe abruptly, and walked haſtily up and down the room. I waited anxiouſly for a renewal of our converſation, though I had not courage to ſpeak. After taking ſeveral turns, he ſuddenly reſumed his ſeat, and drawing his chair ſtill nearer to mine, with his arms folded and his countenance mournful, he again addreſſed me:

"I ſhall not impoſe a very ſevere trial for your fortitude," ſaid he: "but I ſhall expect that, if you promiſe to comply with my requeſt, no earthly power will ever induce you to ſwerve from your engagement." A fluſh of

reſentment for the implied ſuſpicion made my cheek glow. My guardian caught the reflection, and, with a promptitude which marked his obſervation, conjured me to pardon him.

"Alas! Gertrude, you are not ſenſible of the varying conflicts which Fate has in ſtore for a being organized as you are. You know not that every path which you are deſtined to tread is overrun with thorns. Doomed to ſuffer for the errors of your parents, you will find this world a ſcene of ſorrows."

"The errors of my parents!" interrupted I: "my father was a man of honour, my mother the moſt faultleſs of her ſex!—Oh, my Lord! ſpare, ſpare their aſhes!—let them ſleep in peace, whatever miſery it may be my lot to ſuffer."

"Your father, Gertrude, was a monſter of deceit, a falſe friend, and an enemy to virtue."

"My Lord," ſaid I, riſing with indignant reſentment, to which my involuntary tears bore teſtimony, "I will not hear my parent ſlandered: nor will I own you as my friend, if you preſume to ſtigmatize his memory."

"You muſt learn to hate his very name—"

"I will periſh firſt," anſwered I with increaſed indignation, at the ſame time ſnatching my father's portrait to my lips, and bathing it with tears. "In the grave he ſleeps," ſaid I: "would to Heaven I were ſo happy!"

"From this hour," interrupted my guardian, "I will be ſilent on the ſubject. I will ſuppreſs the influence of truth, and only live for your felicity." He now looked wildly round the room, and liſtened; then, in a low voice, continued: "A ſpell encircles you; a labyrinth of ſorrow forms the outline of your fate; the central clue is enveloped

in

in darkneſs. You muſt learn to bear with patience; to ſubmit without complaining; you muſt obey my wiſh, or you muſt never ſee me more." I ſhuddered. The ſound of his voice was ſternly authoritative. I almoſt trembled while it continued to vibrate on my brain. At length, after an agonizing ſtruggle, in which all the ſenſations of my ſoul bore their equal portions of fear and ſorrow, I reſumed the power of ſpeech, and, with energy ſpringing from deſpair, replied:

"Be brief, my Lord: my hopes are faint, my faculties enfeebled. Speak! O! ſpeak your wiſhes; and if no diſgrace will attach itſelf to my compliance, I will obey."

"Twelve months ſecluſion." I ſtarted. "Already your reſolution begins to ſicken," ſaid my guardian. "I have often queſtioned the vaunted courage of your ſex; for though every

woman is eager to enter the lists of romantic heroism, few, very few have fortitude to bear the hour of trial. Pardon me, Gertrude; but I thought your persevering reason was equal to your virtue."

This reproof, which was ironically delivered, piqued and humbled me. I remained silent, but deeply troubled. My guardian in a few moments proceeded: "I have resolved, and my resolutions are inflexible, to pass twelve months in Italy with Lady Denmore. It is her particular request; and, in her present state of health, I cannot refuse to grant it. So recently snatched from a guilty grave, so wounded, so feeble both in thinking and corporeal powers, I have neither the inclination nor the courage to afflict her farther. You cannot wish it."

"Oh, Heavens!" exclaimed I; "not on my account, my Lord. It has been my

my fate already to become an object of ſuſpicion. Baniſh me; drive me from your protection; give my remaining days to ſorrow: but, I conjure you, add not another thorn to wound the breaſt of Lady Denmore."

"Renounce thee, Gertrude!" exclaimed my guardian, claſping me to his heart, as I ſtood deprived of motion. "Oh, never! never! This ſeparation will be tranſient; my thoughts ſhall never quit you. I will in fancy be your aſſociate ſtill; I will be your friend, your protector: all that has paſſed ſhall be forgotten. Reaſon, and the progreſs of time, will harmonize our feelings: ah! my Gertrude! how barbarouſly have thine been wounded! how unjuſtly has Fate dealt out its arrows againſt thy gentle boſom! Yet be tranquil; and when I return to England, let me behold you happy. Lady Denmore's precarious ſtate of health may terminate

our travels." Here I obſerved a tear rolling down his cheek; it ſeemed to electrify my heart; I leaned upon his ſhoulder to ſupport myſelf, for my limbs ſeemed to loſe their ſtrength, and my eyes were drowned in ſympathetic ſorrow.

"May I hope, Gertrude," ſaid my guardian, ſtriking off the tear as if he reproached its weakneſs, "may I expect that you will learn to bear this ſhort ſecluſion? For your ſake I would endure a dungeon's horrors," continued he, ſoftening his voice, and fixing his dark eyes with impreſſive eloquence on mine. "If you refuſe this requeſt, it ſhall be the laſt I will ever make. I wiſh not to command, but to lead your mind by the ſoft chain of mutual feeling."

"My Lord, I do not comprehend you," ſaid I, fearful and aſtoniſhed.

"I might

"I might have ſaid affection," continued my guardian: "the term would have been more appropriate." My embarraſſment increaſed; my pride was awakened; my delicacy wounded; and, while my honour ſhrunk involuntarily at the meaning which my ſenſes drew from language ſo equivocal, I would have quitted the room, but Lord Denmore detained me.

"How ardently do I admire the graceful indignation of your mind!" ſaid he. "How torturing is that reſtraint, which circumſtances impoſe upon my feelings! You cannot, you muſt not heſitate to place unbounded confidence in one, whoſe affection is more than that of an huſband. Tell me that you will rely on me firmly, excluſively."

"If, as my guardian, and as the friend of my long-loſt father, you ſtill offer your protection," ſaid I, "my gratitude ſhall be unbounded."

"Is there not a name more dear than friend or guardian?" interrupted Lord Denmore. "Is there no whiſperer within your breaſt, that tells you, I have a yet more tender claim upon your feelings?"

"None, my Lord," anſwered I firmly. "And even thoſe which gratitude allows muſt ſpeedily ſubſide, when you abjure that graceful delicacy which firſt gave them exiſtence. I ſhould be ſorry to forget the kindneſs you have already ſhown me; but reſentment, from a warmly honourable mind, will perhaps teach you to reſpect its ſorrows, not to mock them."

"Heavens! Gertrude! can you believe me capable of ſuch barbarian cruelty?" exclaimed my guardian.

"I can fear what I ſhould expire to know, my Lord."

"And can you not hope what you would delight to prove?" ſaid he.

"I can

"I can dread that inſult which would annihilate me."

Lord Denmore ſmiled, but not unfeelingly; and I was glad to find that my reproach did not mortify him too ſeverely: for I could ſcarcely depend on my reſolution, if I beheld diſtreſs or pain wringing the heart of ſuch a being. To ſhield my boſom from more than ordinary tenderneſs, I muſt feel at leaſt aſſured that Lord Denmore's is exempt from anguiſh: for alas! the ſympathy which his ſorrow would excite might ſoon deſerve a much ſofter appellation. But whither am I wandering? It is in imagination only that I ſtray; for all my hopes and all my affections are fixed on one darling object.

My guardian's penetration was too keen for any attempt of mine to miſlead it. He watched the ſtrong emotions of my ſoul; he traced the torturing

thought through all the labyrinths of my brain, and found that it led to his image indelibly impreſſed upon its fibres. I perceived the triumph of his mind: I would have condemned it. But, alas! it is folly to mock the ſun-beam, while the unguarded boſom is fevered by its influence. Had I denied my weakneſs, Lord Denmore would have deſpiſed me for the falſehood, and only felt more decidedly, that the ſoul's confeſſion was ſincere, becauſe it was involuntary.

"Name the ſpot of ſecluſion," ſaid I.

"Denmore Caſtle."

I recollected my mournful prediction, and I ſhuddered: my heart became faint; my eyes were bent upon the ground. Lord Denmore continued:

"The eſtabliſhment ſhall be liberal; the means of comfort ſuch as your own fancy ſhall ſelect. I only prohibit one indulgence."

"Name

"Name it, my Lord," ſaid I with my eyes downcaſt, and my ſpirits ſinking more deeply.

"The ſociety of ſtrangers."

"All ſociety you would ſay," my Lord. "You think that I am fond of life; the votary of pleaſure. You have initiated me in the world's enjoyments; you have taught me, for a few ſhort days, to unbend my mind, long ſhackled by a weight of ſorrows. The tranſition has ſeemed ſtrange to thoſe who are incapable of feeling; but a diſcriminating mind muſt know, that the ſenſations of a ſenſible heart are generally in extremes. Exceſſive joy is frequently the prelude to exceſſive anguiſh."

"It has always pleaſed me to ſee you happy," interrupted my guardian.

"Pardon me, my Lord," ſaid I ſighing. "The gaiety of my heart was merely a ſtruggle to ſhake off deſpair. But you interpreted the effort to a leſs

worthy motive: you conſidered the aſſumed vivacity of my ſpirits as the prelude to that levity, which is neither in my nature nor my inclination. I was leſs gloomy than I have lately been, becauſe I wiſhed not to obtrude my melancholy on the ſociety of your family. I often ſmiled, when I could have wept, and boaſted the careleſſneſs of my heart, even at the moment when that heart was breaking. I have been lively merely to avoid the imputation of a ſullen humour. I have endeavoured to adopt the manners of thoſe with whom I have aſſociated. If you blame my gaiety, at leaſt do juſtice to the motive that inſpired it."

"I have obſerved your mind leſs penſive, your countenance leſs gloomy," ſaid Lord Denmore: "and the change delighted me."

"Then wherefore ſeek to freeze the early buds of hope, to kill them before they

they bloſſom? Why wound my heart by falſe interpretations? Why ſubdue the blameleſs energy of a mind painfully ſuſceptible? I cannot endure ſuſpicion—becauſe I feel that I am innocent of any criminal intention. But there are beings who miſinterpret the moſt harmleſs actions; who envy the unhappy even the fainteſt gleam of hope; and ſecretly enjoy that ſorrow, which they oſtentatiouſly appear to ſoften."

"Have *I* deſerved ſuch cenſure?" ſaid Lord Denmore, gravely. "I only propoſed a ſhort retirement."

"And your will ſhall be obeyed," ſaid I. "In ſolitude and ſadneſs I will for ever reſign thoſe proſpects which your kindneſs once expanded. I will linger through a life of melancholy ſecluſion;—lament in ſilence; and in ſorrow count my few remaining days, till the grave ſhall terminate their progreſs: for, deprived of that which is moſt

moſt dear, the fancy may in vain wander for conſolation. I will think on—"

"Whom, my Gertrude?" interrupted Lord Denmore, earneſtly.

"My dear dead parents," anſwered I, burſting into tears. "I will dedicate my youth, my early days to the memory of their virtues. I will forget the envious, the ill-judging world; fly from the overbearing pride of little minds, the oſtentation of the vulgar proud, and the ſuſpicions of the conſciouſly baſe."

Lord Denmore preſſed my hand to his quivering lips. A tear fell from his eye; I watched it a moment while it gliſtened on my arm. Then with a ſigh which I had not power to repel, I ſunk upon his ſhoulder.

"Think not ſo mournfully, my ſweet Gertrude!" cried my guardian. "This ſacrifice is due to my domeſtic happineſs: you do not, you cannot wiſh me to be wretched. Lady Denmore

is

is my wife; and the decencies of ſociety muſt not be violated."

"Oh God!" exclaimed I, with increaſed emotion: "not for me." He proceeded:

"You will eſteem me, Gertrude, you will remember me with ſomething near affection. If I ſhould die before my return to England, I will leave you half my fortune. You would lament me, Gertrude; for then, then you would know me; the grave is a true delineator; when it cloſes on thoſe we ever loved, how juſt is memory; how lenient becomes that ſtern ſcrutinizer the mind, becauſe it is no longer ſwayed by prejudice! Yet, I ſhould be ſorry to leave you, Gertrude, to leave you in this vile, unfeeling world, ſo pure, ſo gentle, ſo unprotected."

I ſobbed like an infant. Lord Denmore threw himſelf on the ſofa, and ſeemed overwhelmed with ſorrow. Oh,

Frances! had you beheld thoſe eloquently ſpeaking eyes, looking with tender, fond regret upon your unhappy friend; had you ſeen his wild, his diſordered features, his quivering lips, his dear pale cheek bathed with a tear of regret for my affliction; you would have felt like me, and like *me* gloried in obeying ſuch a mortal!

Yes! I will forget the world; I will become the ſad recluſe of Denmore Caſtle.—Adieu, adieu.

LETTER XXXIII.

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 18, 1796.

Lord Denmore had ſcarcely quitted me, when Mr. Treville entered from the adjoining apartment; I was confuſed

and

and diſpleaſed at his abrupt intruſion, becauſe the tendency of my mind was leaning towards ſorrowful rumination, and I felt that it would require ſomething like ſuperior fortitude, to methodize and ſubdue its long cheriſhed emotions. I had from that period to date a new era of events; to reconcile my fancy to returning ſolitudes; to forget the buſy, dangerous ſcenes of tumultuous pleaſures; and to ſubdue by time and by reflection a paſſion which, without a ſtrong reſiſtance, menaced to vanquiſh and deſtroy me. It was now the hour to queſtion my own heart; to fortify its ſenſibility; to evince ſomething like ſtrength of mind; to analyze the paſſions; to reſtrain the wandering fancy; and to aſſert that character which is above all ſexual weakneſs; and which can alone ſuſtain the reſolution of woman under the influence of her affections. I felt that my ſpirit was ardent, my ſenſibility

ſibility acute, my delicacy tenacious, my reſentment vivid, and my ſenſe of honour invincible: yet I knew that the human mind was prone to view all objects in a deceptive mirror; to faſhion them to the wiſh, not to the propriety, of the moment: I was conſcious that the actuating origin of our paſſions was inſcrutable; and yet I felt that it was a duty which I owed myſelf, to trace them as far as intellect could go, and vigilantly to reſiſt the ſubtlety of their encroachments, though I might be vanquiſhed by the experiment.

On Mr. Treville's entering the room, I retreated towards the window, in order to compoſe my features, which had been conſiderably agitated during the interview with my guardian. The fervour of my affections never failed to ſpeak through my eyes, thoſe ſilent heralds of the heart, and, with all my vaunted fortitude, even at that moment

an

an idiot might have traced their predominating powers over my wavering imagination. I glanced contempt at my obtruſive viſitor, through the tear which had riſen from regret at Lord Denmore's departure: my voice was tremulous with reſentment; but it was alſo agitated by tenderneſs: my cheek was fluſhed with indignation, and, at the ſame inſtant, glowing with the ſuffuſion of conſcious impropriety.

Mr. Treville was not one of thoſe unfaſhionably feeling mortals, who are ſubjected to compunctious ſenſations, or repulſed by the reſentment of an offended woman. He enjoyed the perturbation his preſence occaſioned; and ſeemed to exult in my diſtreſs, while he proved his own inſenſibility. Bold and ſelf-applauded, he approached me: his cheek wore an audacious ſmile; his lips ſeemed dreſſed with a ſarcaſtic expreſſion, which made me anticipate a new

a new ſeries of impertinence. I was not deceived by the ſymptomatic expreſſion of either; for the trueſt diſciple of Lavater could not have placed a more appropriate interpretation on the lineaments of Mr. Treville's countenance, than I did at this perplexing moment.

The tumult of my mind was conſiderably augmented, by the conviction that Mr. Treville had overheard all that had paſſed between my guardian and myſelf. It was of a nature that ought to have been ſacred. I knew that by its being in the breaſt of Mr. Treville, its publicity became certain. My chagrin was painful; my humiliation poignant. "I am again in the power of this babbling tale-bearer," ſaid I; "and my expoſure is now inevitable."

An aſſociation of ideas followed as rapidly as thought could connect them. Shame and compunction, ſuſpicion and

and jealouſy, neglect and ſorrow, ruſhed forcibly on my mind, in the forms of my guardian, Lady Denmore, and myſelf. My ſpirits were haraſſed while I deviſed means to eſcape the invidious ſarcaſms of the world, ſpringing from chimeras ingendered by the fertile imagination of my libertine liſtener, and, unfortunately for me, ſtrengthened by an outline of truth which would ſet ſcepticiſm at defiance. I was bewildered with ſuggeſtions which reflection alone could ſolve; and which an unpremeditated deciſion would render inexplicable. I therefore endeavoured to compoſe my features, and, if poſſible, to meet my antagoniſt with the ſerenity of reaſon.

"You poſſeſs a moſt enviable command of countenance!" ſaid Mr. Treville, fixing his eyes on mine with perſevering rudeneſs. "It really blends the Stoic's firmneſs with the meekeſt

ſemblance

ſemblance of ſimplicity! Where, and how did you acquire this ſuperlative art, this invaluable ſecret? Can you not give me a leſſon on the importance of ſelf-poſſeſſion? You will find me an apt ſcholar." I would have quitted the room; but Mr. Treville, placing his back againſt the door, continued to addreſs me:

"Yet one moment, pretty enthuſiaſt," ſaid he, "one ſhort moment may be ſpared to friendſhip, ſince ſo many have recently been dedicated to love." My face reddened with ſcorn and reſentment.

"You bluſh moſt eloquently!" ſaid Mr. Treville. "The ſoft confeſſion ſpeaks to the heart, and I allow its claims to abſolution: but I am a ſordid judge: I muſt be paid for ſecreſy, though Denmore is my friend, and you are the tranſgreſſor." I endeavoured to open the door; he caught me in his arms,

arms, and rudely kiſſed me. Rouſed by the ſting of inſult, I threw him from me, and, burſting into tears, again endeavoured to eſcape from the apartment.

"You are wiſe in attempting to alarm Lady Denmore," ſaid Mr. Treville: "ſhe will profit by your rage, and probably will make diſcoveries highly honourable to your feelings. Lord Denmore will alſo thank you for your diſcretion." The ironical tone in which he ſpoke increaſed my anger; my tears fell in torrents, my agitation became violent, my emotions ungovernable; and I threw myſelf into a chair, ſubdued by contending conflicts.

"Why do you weep, my pretty Gertrude?" ſaid Mr. Treville. "Do you already repent of the confidence which you have placed in your lover? Would you retract the confeſſion which his perſuaſive cunning has extorted from you? Why fly to artificial ſubterfuges? why

why aſſume a reſiſting apathy, which the warmth of your affections cannot but contemn? What have you to fear from the world's opinion? Are you not the miſtreſs of your wiſhes? Has not Lord Denmore both fortune and inclination to gratify them? Did I not hear his involuntary profeſſions; his warm impaſſioned language; his deeply-breathing ſighs? and were they not directed to the daughter of his friend, the friend of his wife?"

I had not power to ſpeak: the fulneſs of my heart was agonizing. Mr. Treville ſilently watched my internal anguiſh, as it convulſed my features; and, after a pauſe of ſome minutes, continued:

"I found not Caſſio's kiſſes on her lips, but I found ſweets there, that would animate an anchoret! I do not wonder that they melted the frozen boſom of my friend:—the philoſophy of a Socrates, the continence of a Scipio, would

would tremble when oppoſed to ſuch temptations."

"The impertinence of ſarcaſm cannot affect my feelings," ſaid I, at the ſame moment evincing the very extent of irritability.

"Feelings that are ſo refined are not ſubjected to the common impreſſions of nature," replied Mr. Treville. "There is ſomething heroic in breaking the bonds of domeſtic happineſs, and revelling in the embraces of a friend's huſband. The laws of poliſhed life will not fail to authorize the one, and to acquit the other. Sanctioned by your lover, who ſhall dare to cenſure your imprudence? He is all powerful; you are all attractive! Nothing can be more natural than ſuch an union, excepting the ſorrow which Lady Denmore will experience, and the abhorrence which the reaſoning part of man-

kind will exemplify at her huſband's conduct."

"You reaſon like a moraliſt!" ſaid I contemptuouſly; "but precept is the ſpecious maſk that hides the want of thoſe virtues which it would be too painful to practiſe."

"Lovely reformer!" interrupted Mr. Treville; "why did you not read your guardian a lecture on the proprieties of wedded life? From ſuch a monitreſs nothing leſs than reformation might have been expected; and no man ſtands more in need of amendment than my friend Lord Denmore."

"Diſgrace not the name of friendſhip, by making it the aſſociate of hypocriſy," ſaid I.

"That ſpecies of friendſhip is excluſively confined to your ſex," replied Mr. Treville; "and I have not the temerity to attempt an innovation, where

where the rule of action has been ſo long eſtabliſhed."

"You are groſsly ſcurrilous!" exclaimed I.

"Merely honeſt, lovely Gertrude!" replied Mr. Treville. "I only utter what all men think, but what few have candour to avow! I cannot, like your ſentimental guardian, flatter the weakneſs that my judgment muſt condemn. I never diſſemble with women: all I labour to acquire is a reputation amongſt men: even then I only keep up the bubble, while it bears my name down the broad tide of popularity."

"Can a man be deemed honourable amongſt men, and yet practiſe every ſpecies of fraud towards women?" ſaid I.

"Nothing is more common," replied Mr. Treville. "The man of ſpirit, and the man of ſentiment, are very diſtinct beings: the one poſſeſſes a

ſilencer in his own courage; while the other is formed to be the dupe of machinations."

"You have wiſely choſen an outward habit, which precludes the peril of a perſonal rencontre," ſaid I: "you fear neither violating the laws of honour, nor inſulting that ſex which your profligacy diſguſts."

"Did Lady Denmore, or Miſs Cecil, give you this laſt piece of information?" inquired Mr. Treville, viewing himſelf in the glaſs, and ſmiling affectedly.

"My own obſervation is my monitor," ſaid I; "and I only conſider the empty vanity of your queſtion as a new trait of your inſignificance and folly."

"Softly, indignant ſcrutinizer!" interrupted Mr. Treville. "Remember, you are ſlandering the leader of all that conſtitutes the importance of faſhionable life; that if you perſevere in the language you now hold, you will be

expelled

expelled from the haunts of taſte and refinement as a prude and are former. I make no doubt but you will ſhortly become a *he-ſhe* philoſopher; that you will pretend to inculcate new doctrines, on the potency of feminine underſtanding, and the abſurdity of ſexual ſubordination. You will preach on the ſublimity of intellectual gratification, and oppoſe the majeſty of mind againſt the ſupremacy of the ſenſes. You will become an advocate for univerſal toleration: you will hope to equalize the authority of the ſexes, and to prove that woman was formed to think, and to become the rational companion of man; though we all know that ſhe was merely created for our amuſement."

"I preach, and I ſhall never fail to feel thoſe precepts which have been inculcated by one who now ſleeps in the grave*," ſaid I; "but whoſe monument

* The late Mrs. Wollſtoncraft.

is built on the immortal baſis which ſupports the rights of woman." On the illuſtrious name of their departed champion, I will beſtow that eulogy which ſhould be the glory of our ſex, though it may expoſe the tyranny of yours."

"Prepoſterous!" exclaimed Mr. Treville: "woman is merely a domeſtic creature; take her from the humble avocations of life, and ſhe becomes—"

"Your equal!" interrupted I. "If I ſpeak individually at the preſent moment, I may add—your ſuperior."

"Have a care!" ſaid my defeated diſputant: "you are treading on perilous ground; you will ſubject yourſelf to a vote of cenſure from the high court of faſhion, for attempting to depreciate my claims to univerſal approbation. But you young reformers, like ſome in the political world, want private character to eſtabliſh public confidence. Like theirs, your oratory will avail but little, while

it wants the firm ſupport of truth, the ſanction of integrity. I ſhould not be ſurpriſed to find you, at ſome future period, when youth and love are on the wane, and the folly of your conduct buried in the obſcurity of time, compoſing ſermons, or writing ſacred leſſons, for the benefit of the riſing generation. You will not be the firſt, by many, of your ſex, who have the effrontery to aſſume all the moral virtues, and to condemn thoſe follies, of which they were in their youthful days conſpicuous examples. But Time is a wonderful obliterator! He can give to the matron's form, the matron's conſequence: he can accompliſh miracles in the female world; and I am ſorry to ſay, that half mankind are ready believers, where outward appearances are calculated to authorize credulity. Thus it is the aim of your ſex to delude the many; while I profeſs

that there is but one mortal upon earth whom I wiſh to deceive."

"I will thank you to name that perſon," ſaid I.

"Lord Denmore!" replied Mr. Treville. "Now tell me why you wiſhed to know?"

"That I may caution the object of your machinations."

"O, monſtrous effrontery!" exclaimed Mr. Treville. "But ſince it is your pleaſure to be miſchievous, I truſt it is alſo your inclination to be candid: for if you reveal one ſyllable of our preſent converſation, I ſhall unfold to the world all that I overhead this morning. I ſhall be believed; you will be laughed at: for who will credit the aſſertion of a convicted hypocrite?" I felt the force of his argument, and made no anſwer.

Thus

Thus am I placed once more in the power of the man whom I deſpiſe; and compelled to add the weight of anticipated diſgrace to the corroding conſciouſneſs of merited reproof.

With ſickening fortitude I bid you farewell.

LETTER XXXIV.

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 20, 1796.

I HAVE been told, that the exhauſted ſpirit wiſhes with impatience for the criſis of thoſe evils which are inevitable. I have heard of inſtances where the wretch condemned to ſuffer an ignominious death has refuſed the ſhort interval allowed him for preparation, and demanded, with undaunted firmneſs, a

prompt execution of the laws. I know that Lord Denmore's departure is fixed for this day se'nnight; and yet I would give worlds, could that period be protracted; even though the tortures of despair augmented every moment, till that which is to separate us for ever.

An unusual spell seems to fasten on my senses, and I feel as though many years had elapsed during the last three months of my existence. There was a period, when the sun rose and set, and the various occurrences of the day passed on in the *routine* of Time, without one after-thought to transcribe them on my memory. But now, even the most trivial events assume the strongest interest: I can retrace every circumstance with a mournful exactitude, and in each descry one object, the source of meditation, the spring of mental action. I hear, I behold no other! all day I talk to him in the still soft language of the heart;

heart; and at night he is never abſent from my viſionary ſlumbers. What a blindly ſenſitive being is woman! How zealouſly does ſhe court the phantoms that miſlead her! How readily does ſhe admit that poiſon to her boſom, which is deſtined to contaminate every ſource of happineſs.

Even the ſtern reproof which I have ſometimes received from Lord Denmore, intereſts and pleaſes me: it looks like the ſolicitude of friendſhip. Every fool can flatter me: ſome have even commended thoſe errors which at the ſame moment my own reaſon has taught me to contemn. I deſpiſed them for their pliant hypocriſy; while the ſincerity of my guardian acquired an intereſt in my heart which I trembled to encourage.

When I mix with other objects, I am under no conſtraint. My thoughts, my words, my actions, are all free as the

winds; yet I feel a want of confidence, which ſeems to ſuſtain my mind when he is preſent; which tells me that I cannot err, ſo ſhielded by his judgment and diſcretion. I find myſelf, when ſeparated from Lord Denmore, perpetually in danger; like the infant, who firſt eſſays his ſtrength, by caſting off the leading-ſtrings which he has been accuſtomed to wear, and without which he fancies himſelf perilouſly feeble.

Lord Denmore frequently calls me his 'deareſt Gertrude.' The term is familiar, and, from any other man, would be deemed inſulting: yet I ſhould be mortified, were he to addreſs me by a name more ceremoniouſly correct. Mr. Treville ventured to ſtyle me 'pretty Gertrude;' and I felt a glow of indignation mantling over my cheek! Perhaps the tone of his voice was leſs pleaſing than Lord Denmore's. It muſt be ſo: the words were nearly ſimilar.

Ah,

Ah, Frances! there are mortals from whom we can bear even ſeverity, which from others would be wholly inſupportable. Are not ſuch beings, by ſome undefinable impulſe, (ſympathy, inſtinct, —name it as you will,) born to control our actions; to intereſt our minds; to prompt our thoughts, ſleeping and awake, elate or ſorrowful? Is there any magic ſufficiently ſtrong to reſcue us from their power over our ſenſes? Tell me. For I am the ſlave of ſuch a faſcination. Like the bird that is enthralled, I ſtruggle for freedom, and the more I ſtruggle the ſtronger I am entangled.

In eight days my guardian will depart for Naples. How ſhall I invent occupations for twelve long months, in the gloomy retirement of Denmore Caſtle? Shall I not feel my memory hourly awakened to new ſorrows, when I contemplate thoſe objects which owe their origin

origin to the taſte and munificence of its owner? Shall I not in every ſilent labyrinth of the venerable woods, in every grotto, by every wandering ſtream, through all the lofty apartments of the ancient habitation, mourn for the abſence of Lord Denmore? What a queſtion! Shall I breathe, hear, ſee, be conſcious of exiſtence?

Lady Denmore is not ſenſible of the happineſs which Heaven has placed within her power. She does not know how to eſtimate the worth of that mortal to whom deſtiny has united her. She is peeviſhly unquiet; querulouſly jealous; and yet, ſhe loves an object the very contraſt of her huſband. Is there not a paſſion of the human mind which predominates over the affections of the heart? and has it not a power which is almoſt magical? Frances, dare I believe that Lady Denmore is the ſlave of *vanity?* That ſhe would be criminal,

criminal, had she but courage to defy the world's opinion?

Yet, should I not be vain of such a husband?—Yes. But in *my* bosom vanity would be a subordinate passion: a mere sensation, springing from the object idolized, rather than feeding a flame which only burnt to dazzle the million. Love is apt to sicken when exposed to the broad eye of public observation; the silence of seclusion is the nurse of sentiment; and, without that harmonizing power, the passions of the soul are little less than brutal.

Oh, Frances! what an infinity of regrets, of sorrows, of contending emotions, will the next eight days unfold! I dare not think of them: the anticipation is terrible!—Adieu.

LETTER XXXV.

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 22, 1796.

LORD Melcomb and Mr. Treville called this evening to viſit Lady Denmore; on their entering the room ſhe ſmiling informed them, that ſhe was half dead with the *ennui* of being alone: what could ſhe mean? Lord Denmore had been, during the whole day, her companion! Can ſhe complain of being *alone* in ſuch ſociety? Were I placed on the bleak ſummit of a mountain, where all around was barren and deſerted, ſoothed by his voice, even though the loudeſt tempeſt beat upon my hovel, *I* ſhould be happy! I know not how to deſcribe the ſentiment which I feel; but, wholly abſorbed by the

the magic of his attractions, Lord Denmore ſeems to me, the univerſe!

What is there in the myſtery of wedded love, that annihilates the charm of mutual faith; and, with the palſying language of diſguſt, bids the heart ſhrink into ſomething near inanity? Why ſhould the virtues, the intellectual graces, the mild philanthropy, the witching affiduities of ſuch a being as Lord Denmore, become imperceptible to his wife, at the ſame moment that they demand admiration from every other object? Should I, were I to know him longer, love him leſs?—Impoſſible! We behold the ſummer dawn, unfolding the vegitating world; we trace the expanding flower through all its changes: we inhale its odours, gaze with delight upon the glowing colours; examine the minute fibres of every wondrous leaf; and ſtill the morn is freſh, the floweret lovely! Days, months, and years roll on;

on; and every ſummer dawn has ſtill its dews, its flowers, its luſtre, its re-animating breezes, whiſpering with the ſweet breath of Nature, and filling the contemplative mind with augmented rapture! We ſicken not at the return of ſpring. But alas, Frances! how anxiouſly do we watch the tedious abſence of the genial ſeaſon! How long, how loneſome ſeems the ſolitude of winter to a mind warmed with the enthuſiaſtic love of Nature!

Lady Denmore obſerves me with ſuſpicious eyes. She ſeldom ſpeaks when I am with her; and yet ſhe requires that I ſhould remain almoſt perpetually in her preſence: her's is the watchfulneſs of wounded pride and diſappointed affection. The firſt, originating in the kind attentions of my guardian; the laſt, in Mr. Treville's univerſal gallantry. She feels no tender ſenſation towards Lord Denmore; but

every

every look and every word betrays her fondneſs for the firſt attachment of her heart. How cruel is that parent who interpoſes between a child and her affections: how barbarous is the zeal which places intereſt as an obſtacle to domeſtic felicity; which takes from the ſenſibilities of nature their pureſt charm, the charm of mutual confidence, and gives the rein which guides the nobleſt paſſions, to the cold hand of vanity, that bane of ſocial happineſs! that gaudy caſket which glitters to the eye of imbecility, but which conceals a hoard of the moſt deadly poiſons!—Adieu.

LETTER XXXVI.

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 23, 1796.

How fondly does the mind love to dwell on anticipated ſcenes, whether gratifying or mournful! How buſy is fancy in following that *ignis fatuus*, which is calculated to miſlead the ſenſes; which preſents a path for the imagination, beſtrewed with flowers, but terminating in pain and diſappointment. Oh, Frances! what a complete machine is the human mind! How eaſily is the ſyſtem of uniformity deſtroyed; and what a uſeleſs chaos does it become, the moment that reaſon ceaſes to guide the ſprings of action. What a creature is woman! How wildly inconſiſtent! How daring, yet how timid! We are

at

at once the moſt ambitious tyrants, and the moſt abject ſlaves. We think that our dominion is ſecure at the very moment when we are under the control of our imperious rulers. How ſlender is the thread which holds our captives! how raſhly do we ſtrain it; how eaſily is it broken! How completely are we the dupes of our affections; and how juſtly does the tyrant who controls us laugh at our vaunted power over the ſenſations of his mind! That woman miſtakes her influence, if ſhe ſuppoſes that it originates in the gratitude or honour of her lover. Man is only conſtant, while he feels the flame of affection burn vividly within his boſom: he is not the creature of our dominion, but of his own paſſions. He will love, as long as he is pleaſed; and he will pleaſe as long as he can love. Sentiment forms no part of his attachment; all the claims of eſteem, generoſity, and

friendſhip, ſink ſubdued before the ruling power of ſelf-gratification. The moment that the ſpell which chains the ſenſes is broken, the phantom Love takes flight, leaving no ſubſtitutes but regret and indignation. Theſe are the deſpots who hold us in a ſtate of bondage! who call themſelves our idolators, till the caprice of their natures prove their apoſtaſy. Created to protect us, they expoſe us to every danger; endowed with ſtrength to ſuſtain our erring judgment, they are ever eager to miſlead us. Formed to faſcinate our ſenſes, they govern them at pleaſure. We boaſt a reſiſting power formed on the baſis of ſtern and frigid virtue; we are philoſophers in precept,—but how often are we women in example! We vaunt our mental energy; man appears to bend beneath conviction; he knows that by his humility he obtains confidence; he ſeems the pupil of our laws, at the ſame

moment that he acts in open violation of the juſtice we would exerciſe. O man! thou pleaſing, ſubtle, fawning, conquering foe! thou yielding tyrant! thou imperious ſlave! What language can deſcribe thee? What mortal delineate thee as thou art? except that being who has been by turns thy idol and thy victim!

How ſtrangely does my mind anticipate ſome dreadful event, which Fate has ſtill in ſtore for me, and which all the ſophiſtry, all the reaſoning of wiſdom could not counteract. I know, I feel that I was born to experience the very acme of human miſery: to nurſe the moſt acute agonies of diſappointed hope, and to ſink beneath the weight of incurable deſpair. Reaſon, religion, conſcious rectitude, ſhould inſtruct me to reſiſt its encroachments. But where is the mortal who can calmly meet the tempeſt which is fraught with deſolation?

lation? Where is the philoſopher who is not ſubject to the pang of diſappointed hope?—where the enthuſiaſt who is at all times above the reach of ſcepticiſm?

Sometimes I aſk myſelf why I am ſo perſecuted? why I am beaten by the fury of the ſtorm, and borne, in defiance of every effort, towards that abyſs where I am inevitably doomed to periſh? My life has been a life of innocence. I have never meditated to deceive; or deceived to vanquiſh. If I have acted erroneouſly, my errors have been thoſe of inexperience: if there be a ſhadow of criminality in my affection for Lord Denmore, it owes its origin to the nobleſt ſenſation—to gratitude!—pure, inſtinctive, ſpontaneous gratitude!

Have I a wiſh, do I entertain a thought, beyond the limits of refined and honourable feeling? In thy preſence, Omniſcient God! I anſwer,—No! My ſoul's purity is uncontaminated by the

the groſſer paſſions. I adore Lord Denmore; I love him more than allother human beings: but, were he to violate the ſacred truſt repoſed in him by my loſt parents; were he to breathe a thought derogatory to my honour; Heaven can bear witneſs (as far as the human mind can foreſee its propenſities), that I believe,—firmly believe, I ſhould hate him.

I go, Frances, I depart for that ſeclu-ſion which will either nurſe deſpair to madneſs, or ſubdue the affections of the heart by apathy eternal. I fly from thee, generous Denmore! from thee, my friend, my patron, my idol, my pre-ſerver! I reſign my boſom to regret; I give my days to eternal ſolitude, my thoughts to mournful meditation. Whi-ther, oh! whither ſhall I wander, ſepa-rated from him whom I have been taught to conſider as my guardian angel? Will not his image haunt my ſickening

fancy? Will not his voice breathe in every dim retreat of thoſe wild ſcenes, whoſe deep ſilence will be only broken by the rude minſtrelſy of Nature? Shall I not recall to mind our ſolitary walks, our intellectual wanderings, our pure but paſt delights? Shall I not, in viſionary ſadneſs, ſtill behold his benignant ſmile, his dark and penetrating eyes, his graceful form, his penſive brow? Will not every object, the mountain pines, hanging their ſombre ſhadows over the ſwift-gliding brook; the grey battlements of the ancient Caſtle, the loftieſt peak, the ſmalleſt floweret, remind me of him,—whom I ſhall ſee—no more? Where, where, in this expanſive chaos of pleaſure and of pain, this wilderneſs of thorns and roſes, where ſhall I find repoſe? Ah, Frances! —in the grave. There, there alone, ſhall this feveriſh, throbbing heart, reſt tranquil.

Weary

Weary of this hard-judging and unfeeling world, my health decays, my mental powers begin to ſicken; the colour hourly fades from my cheek; and an increaſing laſſitude of frame ſeems the ſlow prelude to total annihilation. Lady Denmore recovers daily. How often does the blooming victim ſmile on the margin of the grave, while the lingering ſufferer recedes from its dark confines, and with every ſtep finds renovating vigour. My hour 'will come, when it will come;' and I await its arrival with the ſtill horror of deſpair.

LETTER XXXVII.

The Same to the Same.

Portman-Square, Sept. 25, 1796.

In a ſhort period, in a very ſhort period, Lord Denmore will be journeying towards diſtant climes, beholding new objects, enjoying new delights. He will be the moſt envied, the moſt happy of the human race. What then ſhall I be? I dare not anticipate my deſtiny.

I have ſcarcely courage to look forward; ſorrow and deſpair ſeem to throw their gigantic ſhadows over every perſpective. A thouſand phantoms haſten to aſſail me. I am too wretched to hope, too feeble to reſiſt, too ſuſceptible to be happy.

I have

I have this inſtant received a meſſage from Lord Denmore. He is alone in the library, and waits to ſpeak with me on important buſineſs. I obey the ſummons, tremblingly I obey it.

LETTER XXXVIII.

The Same to the Same.

Portman-Square, Sept. 26, 1796.

It is Lord Denmore's pleaſure, that I ſhould take up my abode at the Caſtle previous to his departure for Italy. A friend, in whom he repoſes the moſt implicit confidence, is left as my guardian during his abſence, with the power to obey my commands in every inſtance that can contribute to my repoſe. How kind, how generous is this indulgence, at a moment when I am conſigned to a

ſecluſion, which would feed the penſive miſchief that clings about my heart, till the irritation of its preſſure would ſicken me to frenzy.

There was a time, when I ſighed for the pleaſures of the world; when my vivid fancy formed a thouſand chimeras of delight in the gaudy regions of folly and diſſipation. Thoſe were the fleeting myriads, born in the ſun-beams of a fairy dream, and deſtined to fade before the undazzled eye of Reaſon. Should I repine at the deluſion? Alas! Frances, what elſe is all that brightens this ſhort, this varying day, this ſublunary journey? What but a ſun-beam or a dream of fancy? We ſlumber amidſt the joys of life; for pleaſure lulls the ſenſes into ſatiety, and we only awake to know the truth of ſorrow. The few momentary delights we are permitted to experience, enervate while they deceive us; we feel their influence benumbing every

ſenſitive

ſenſitive affection, as the diſtillation of the poppy creeps through the feveriſh boſom. But when its deadening powers evaporate, we confeſs the acute miſery of unequivocal ſenſation. I have, during a ſhort period, felt the poiſonous delirium; and I now revive but to know that it is paſt for ever!

What a curſe is memory to thoſe who have outlived the ſuſtaining power of hope! Why are we deſtined to retrace the paths of pleaſure, in imagination, while our weary footſteps tread on the thorns of diſappointment. The eye looks forward with a ſparkling joy, where opening ſcenes unfold the deluſions of exiſtence: but it is clouded with tears, when it contemplates a receding perſpective; while every moment preſents its fading to oblivion. We gaze on the phantom Happineſs, when it departs, as we follow the dear remains of a valued loſt companion. The cold

grave opens to receive the one, and the glooms of Time expand to veil the other in eternal darkneſs.

To-morrow I ſhall ſet out for the Caſtle. I have often thought of the hour when I ſhould cloſe my eyes upon this ſcene of mortal ſuffering; I have thought of it with calmneſs. Why then do I ſhudder at this tranſient ſeparation? Tranſient! the word ſeems ill adapted to the circumſtance! I might find a ſubſtitute more appropriate:—painful, weary, torturing,—ah! Frances, I might add—eternal!

To-morrow I depart.

Midnight.

I am now in my chamber: but I cannot think of ſleeping. The carriage is ordered to be at the door by day-break; the houſe is ſtill; every thing ſeems tranquil; every thing, except that heart which is deſtined to experience

rience agony, till it repoſes in the grave.

Oh God! why do I ſhrink like a coward from the moment of trial? What is the boaſted ſtrength of human fortitude, if, like the glowing tints of twilight, it fades away when the dark hour of fate ſteals on us? Alas! would the dim ſhadows terminate the weary ſcene, how eagerly ſhould I preſs forward to their deepeſt obſcurity. But I ſhall ſtill be wretched; I ſhall know the poignancy of regret, when the ſenſibilities of joy are paſt for ever.

A few minutes before I retired to my chamber, I took my leave of Lord Denmore. Ah, Frances! ſuch a parting! Not a ſyllable was uttered on either ſide. He held my trembling hand, he preſſed it to his heart. A ſigh ſtole from that ſource of unexampled feeling. I anſwered it with tears. He twice receded towards the door of the

apartment; and twice returned irreſolute and ſorrowful. After many ſtruggles he entered the antichamber. I loſt ſight of him. I was electrified by the magnitude of my deſpair! I fell upon my knees; and claſping my convulſive hands, with eyes upraiſed and drowned in tears, exclaimed, "O God! whatever my fate may be, watch over and preſerve this benignant angel!"

My voice, the tone of which was marked with agony, recalled Lord Denmore: he returned, he approached me; I hid my face upon his arm. Frances—he wept! His pale cheek was waſhed with tears; he claſped me to his boſom; he kiſſed my cold and quivering lips; raiſed me from the ground, and, placing his hands before his eyes, darted out of the apartment.

I muſt relinquiſh my taſk for a ſhort time. The blood flows chilly at my heart, my pulſe throbs languidly, and

and my eyes are dim with weeping; I cannot proceed.——

Two o'clock.

Again with a trembling hand I reſume my pen, I have paſſed an hour in tears. I am more tranquil, though not leſs wretched. The ſtill ſadneſs of regret ſinks deep into the heart; like the ſmall ſtreamlet, the voice of trivial grief is loud and babbling, while the magnitude of real ſorrow reſembles the profound and ſlowly gliding river; not loud—but perilous.

In your boſom I lock up the ſacred treaſure of my grief: I there depoſit it with confidence unbounded. I have diſcloſed the mournful progreſs of my deſtiny with a ſigh! I have wept and bluſhed at my own weakneſs; yet, that ſigh, thoſe tears, thoſe bluſhes, will be the bonds which muſt render the ſorrows they have ſealed, inviolate. While

I continue to live, let them remain in the breaſt of ſympathetic friendſhip. When the tablet of my fate is cloſed, by the cold hand of Death, let them claim the tear, the ſigh, from every feeling boſom.

What an evening was the laſt! Lady Denmore ſeemed unuſually gay at ſupper. She talked more and ſmiled oftener, than I ever remember to have ſeen her. *I* was neither gay nor ſmiling when *ſhe* was wretched.

During the evening, my guardian was more than penſive; he was gloomy, even to ſadneſs; his arms were perpetually folded; he was reſtleſs, though thoughtful. Sometimes he ſighed deeply; at others he ſeemed transfixed by ſorrow, and talking to himſelf in a kind of whiſpering rumination. I liſtened to catch the fainteſt ſound of his voice, but it was indiſtinct, even to the ear of mute attention. As he paced

to and fro in the ſupper-room, my eyes followed him with a lynx-like watchfulneſs. I ſaw no other being.

Lady Melcomb and Mr. Treville ſupped with us. They frequently addreſſed their converſation to me, but the powers of ſpeech were chained by ſolicitude for one object, and millions might in vain have ſhouted for attention. They ſhould have recollected that, dazzled by the luſtre of the ſun, we view not the ephemera which hover in its beams.

Three o'clock.

The dawn is juſt beginning to break, and I muſt prepare for my departure. I have heard that criminals, the night before their execution, have ſlept—ſlept ſoundly! I have been guilty of no crime, and yet *I* cannot even ſlumber. Why, why do I not ſleep—for ever?

Often

Often in the anguiſh of my heart do I queſtion it: Does the weary pilgrim dread to find a ſanctuary where he may reſt his load of ſorrow? Does the tempeſt-beaten mariner avoid the peaceful haven? Does the feveriſh lip cloſe when the cooling draft preſents itſelf? Theſe are ſelf-evident propoſitions: they require no ſophiſtry to convince. Reaſon anſwers them with the prompt voice of Nature. Then why do I ſhrink from that criſis which will decide my fate?—why?

Becauſe the deceiver Hope ſtill bids me linger on the wreck, though the yawning gulf around me menaces deſtruction. Becauſe the feeling heart *muſt love*, or it muſt *periſh*.

It is ſingular, that whenever I think of Denmore Caſtle, the church-yard is the object moſt prominent in my imagination. Yet wherefore ſhould I check the

the anticipation of that hour, when this aching boſom ſhall freeze in the ſepulchre, whoſe marble jaws I have frequently contemplated? Surely the idea ought to bring conſolation. I ought to ſmile, when I reflect that within thoſe cold and gloomy precincts, Lord Denmore's duſt will mix with mine. There the union will be ſacred and indiſſoluble. No ſtorms will viſit the ſtill ſleep of death; no arm have power to ſeparate our aſhes, or to extinguiſh that immortal ſpark, which philoſophers call ſoul; but which is undefinable even to the wiſeſt. There can be nothing in this idea which reaſon may not ſanction; for, nauſeous would be the cup of life, if hope did not promiſe that when we have taſted of its bittereſt dregs, there yet remained in ſtore ſome particle of comfort for the innocent!—The *innocent!* Yes, Frances, I repeat the word. The Perſian worſhips the ſun; he is, perhaps, miſguided

in

in his idolatry; yet he thinks that he is right; for from that ſun he derives the comforts of light and warmth; he by its aid beholds the wonders of creation, which elſe would be a blank. He examines the ſyſtem which rules that univerſal good; he ſees it perfect; he knows, that were the flaming orb extinct, the harmony of nature would be deſtroyed, and he would in the mighty chaos periſh!

Who then can blame the bigot? This may be an excentric hypotheſis: but if it reconciles me to myſelf, it will plead an exoneration even of Perſian idolatry.

Thus do I attempt to reaſon, even on the margin of deſpair. The collected ſtate of my mind ſeems to precede an awful termination of its ſorrows, as the exhauſted ſufferer ſinks on the boſom of reſignation, at the approach of death. I am weary of thoſe pangs which ſeem

perpetual.

perpetual. I have reſiſted their encroachments, but I am enfeebled by the combat.

The delirium of love is ſcarcely curable. We cheriſh it in ſilence; and we nurſe it with falſe hopes, till it maſters our reſolution, and ſets philoſophy at defiance.

Lady Denmore's bell rings! The carriage is not yet come—the ſervants are ſtill ſleeping—the ſun has ſcarcely riſen.

This haſte is unneceſſary; but Lady Denmore is impatient for my departure.

I hear the rattling of wheels; the chaiſe advances acroſs the ſquare; again the bell is rung. Oh God! would it were the knell of death, paſſing my unquiet ſoul from anguiſh to eternity!

I am ſummoned to breakfaſt. My limbs tremble; my heart faints in my boſom, the blood ſeems to curdle in my cheek, and every object grows dim before me. I deſcend. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIX.

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 27, 1796.

WITH a mind ſcarcely capable of reflection, and a heart almoſt burſting with ſorrow, I deſcended to the breakfaſt-room. I confeſs that I hoped to find Lord Denmore alone; for I fancied that I had a thouſand things to ſay, which, on the preceding evening, I had not reſolution to utter. The moment now approached, when I felt the neceſſity of being explicit; and the ruminations of the paſt night had filled my boſom with a kind of deſperate courage, which is ſometimes the ſubſtitute for calm and invincible fortitude. But my diſappointment was ſevere, when I beheld Lady Denmore, looking unuſually

uſually happy; my guardian intently peruſing a paper which he had been writing; and the Ducheſs ſitting penſively at the tea-table.

On entering the room, my tottering ſteps and pallid cheeks ſeemed to ſtrike every perſon preſent: but the emotions evident in each countenance were in no reſpect ſimilar. Lord Denmore ſighed, and for a few moments ſeemed as if preparing to inquire the cauſe of my indiſpoſition. The Ducheſs looked earneſtly at me; and Lady Denmore, by a ſignificant ſmile, ſaid every thing that was unkind and humiliating.

I took my chair, and drew it towards the table: my hand was rendered feeble by agitation. Lord Denmore, obſerving my embarraſſed manner, ſtarted from his ſeat, and aſſiſted me: a ſudden fluſh glowed over my cheek; whether it was obſerved by him, I know not; for

for my eyes were bent upon the ground, and my voice was ſcarcely audible, while I thanked him.

The Ducheſs, with a gentle demeanour, preſented me a cup of chocolate. I bowed a ſilent acknowledgment, and raiſed it to my lips, while my tears fell involuntarily. My guardian once glanced towards me; but it was a tranſient attention, and he ſeemed fearful that Lady Denmore ſhould remark it; while ſhe, reclined upon the ſofa, yawned, and ſmiled, with barbarous indifference.

"This is the longeſt morning I ever remember to have paſſed," ſaid her Ladyſhip.

"You have not been awake an hour," cried my guardian: then, turning to me, he added, "How have you ſlept, Gertrude?"

"Not well, my Lord," ſaid I, with a faultering voice.

"I am

"I am ſorry for it," ſighed my guardian: "a mind ſo pure as yours ſhould never be unquiet."

"Repoſe does not always await on innocence," interrupted Lady Denmore. "Heaven knows I can bear witneſs of the aſſertion: but there are ſome people whoſe caprices, however frivolous, excite the tendereſt ſympathy; while even the acute ſufferings of others are placed to the account of affectation." A ſilence again followed, as though every hearer was ruminating on this ambiguous remark; till her Ladyſhip, taking up a book which lay on the ſofa, added, "You will forget to write to us."

"I hope not," ſaid I faintly.

"I will anſwer your letters, tell you what I think of Italy, and give you an exact account of all its beauties."

"Your Ladyſhip will do me honour," anſwered I.

"A journal

"A journal of our travels will afford you infinite amuſement in the quiet retreats of Denmore Caſtle."

I ſighed, but made no anſwer: again my guardian's eyes were raiſed from the paper. I felt my colour change: a combination of painful ideas made the blood ruſh through my heart with more than its uſual circulation.

"We ſhall find you, on our return, much improved by ſtudy, and weaned from the follies of this deceitful world," added Lady Denmore, again yawning, and arranging the ſofa pillow. "You will not want amuſement, with ſuch a library as the Caſtle will afford you: I am ſure I ſhall often envy your ſolitude."

The buſt, Frances! the buſt of Lord Denmore ſeemed to paſs before my eyes, followed by the ſhadow of my dear mother, and my whole frame ſhivered.

vered. My guardian again glanced at me, with an expreſſion which language could not have conveyed.

"I adviſe you to cultivate your taſte for drawing," ſaid Lady Denmore: "the views about the Caſtle, and particularly thoſe near the caſcade, will preſent enchanting ſubjects."

My guardian turned his chair towards the fire, and the cup trembled in my hand. The ſpot where I had been preſerved by him was inſtantly, in imagination, before me. I fancied that I heard the wild roar of the falling waters; that I beheld the various avenues of the venerable woods; the ruſtic bridge; the beloved receſs; all, all appeared around me; and, loſt in the deluſion of my ſenſes, I ſcarcely remembered to whom I was ſpeaking.

"Are you not well?" inquired the Ducheſs with a gentle voice. I ſtarted from my reverie, and ſighing—

"Not

"Not perfectly ſo," ſaid I, with confuſed heſitation.

"The early hour of waking has perhaps fatigued you," cried Lady Denmore. "Indeed I ſhould not have riſen, had it not been to bid you once more farewell."

My guardian ſmiled, and ſhook his head. I made no anſwer. A ſervant now entered, to ſay that the carriage was ready. I roſe from my ſeat, and looking at the Ducheſs, with my eyes full of tears, requeſted her to accept my thanks for all her kindneſs. She kiſſed me affectionately.

"Whether or not I live to ſee you again, my love," ſaid ſhe, "you will have my beſt wiſhes." Then turning towards her daughter, ſhe added, "Harriet, Miſs St. Leger is going."

"Adieu, Gertrude!" ſaid Lady Denmore coldly, ſtill reclining, with liſtleſs indifference, on the ſofa. My heart throbbed, and my lip quivered, when I

attempted

attempted to addreſs my guardian, who was earneſtly employed in ſealing the letter which he had been writing. His fingers ſhook convulſively: my eyes were fixed upon them involuntarily.

"Will you ſee Miſs St. Leger to the carriage?" ſaid Lady Denmore; while the Ducheſs took my hand, with a kindneſs peculiar to her nature.

"Preſently! there is no occaſion for ſuch haſte," replied my guardian with viſible irritation. "I have yet ſomething of importance to ſay; and a great deal to arrange before Gertrude departs." Then pauſing, and looking at me, he added: "The chaiſe may come again in an hour or two; you are not ſo preſſed for time that you muſt be driven away ſo rudely."

"You are ridiculouſly whimſical," ſaid Lady Denmore peeviſhly: "I have broke my reſt, and fatigued myſelf almoſt to fainting, from mere civility

towards Miſs St. Leger. It was my intention to ſleep an hour or two as ſoon as ſhe was gone; but if you ſtay bidding farewell the whole morning, my purpoſe will be impracticable."

"I will go immediately," ſaid I, turning towards the door. My guardian darted forwards, and, ſnatching my hand, exclaimed:

"By Heavens! this is inhuman. Gertrude, I requeſt, I conjure you to ſtay. I will not ſuffer you to obey ſuch indelicate and barbarous injunctions. There is no part of your conduct, ſince I have had the honour of being your protector, which deſerves ſuch a puniſhment; and ſhame on the unfeeling wretch, who will tamely witneſs an unmerited and humiliating penance, where no crime has been committed!"

Lady Denmore's ill-humour ſeemed to augment. Again I requeſted leave to ſet out immediately. My guardian

continued,

continued, after a viſible effort to ſuppreſs his indignation:

"Is it not ſufficient that you have conſented to bury yourſelf in obſcurity for twelve long months; that you have patiently endured ſuſpicion and contempt; but you muſt be driven to your ſolitude with a breaking heart? By what right is ſuch ſorrow, ſuch degradation inflicted? If you had proved unworthy of my protection, I was at liberty to withdraw it: but I can have no plea for retaining my authority, merely for the purpoſe of exerciſing oppreſſion. I cannot, I will not behold you ſinking beneath the perſecutions of malignant natures; I know your worth, and I will teach you to aſſert it."

"Miſs St. Leger, the carriage waits," cried Lady Denmore, riſing from the ſofa, and almoſt immediately again reſeating herſelf.

"The carriage will not be wanted till twelve o'clock," ſaid my guardian ſternly. It was now only eight.

I entreated permiſſion to depart. Lord Denmore would not hear me, but continued pacing the breakfaſt-room with haſty ſteps; while his contracted brow and folded arms betrayed more than an ordinary perturbation. The Ducheſs ſeemed perplexed and uneaſy; while Lady Denmore, her anger and impatience augmenting every moment, bit her lip, grew red, and ſmiled with ſcornful indignation. The Ducheſs preſſed my hand, and pointed to a chair, on which I threw myſelf, burſting into tears, and nearly overwhelmed with affliction.

My guardian now approached me. "From this moment, Gertrude," ſaid he, with a voice interrupted by agitation, "I conjure you to ſuppreſs your tears; to feel your own importance, and

and to rely on my oppoſing every effort that can be made to humble or diſtreſs you. We are ſhortly deſtined to ſeparate, perhaps never to meet again: this ſacrifice I make to my domeſtic quiet. But I declare, if there be honour or humanity in the breaſt of man, I will not ſuffer you to depart, till I behold you happy."

"Very romantic, indeed!" ſaid Lady Denmore, with marked indignation.

"Perfectly natural," added the Duchess gravely. "I know not how cuſtoms have been ſo changed; but when I was a young woman, men, even amidſt their eccentricities, never loſt ſight of their good-breeding. The new ſyſtem of manners may be eaſy and accommodating; but its conſequences are ſometimes extremely diſtreſſing."

"Did the old ſchool authorize a married man in inſulting his wife, and

avowing a partiality for another woman?" ſaid Lady Denmore.

That pernicious example is reſerved for theſe enlightened times, thought I. While I made this tacit obſervation, the Ducheſs replied: "Women of the old ſchool, having leſs liberty, were expoſed to fewer temptations: their purſuits were more feminine, their manners more refined: they neither paſſed their days in roaming abroad, nor their nights at a gaming-table: they found pleaſure in domeſtic harmony, and improvement in the ſociety of men of ſenſe."

"Domeſtic harmony is exploded," ſaid Lady Denmore; "and men of ſenſe are ſo ſcarce, that the ſearch after them is almoſt hopeleſs."

"Pardon me, madam," interrupted my guardian: "there are more men of ſenſe, than women of diſcernment. But while your ſex will give the preference

to

to fools and coxcombs, it cannot be a matter of aſtoniſhment, that ours ſhould rove for happineſs."

"Why then do you ſuffer fools and coxcombs to poſſeſs that art of pleaſing, which pedantry and wiſdom diſdain to practiſe?" ſaid Lady Denmore. "Life is but a gloomy ſcene, unleſs it be enlivened by thoſe brilliant vapours, which you call empty and unmeaning, but which I conſider as the luminaries of exiſtence."

"The *ignis fatuus* which will lead you to deſtruction," replied my guardian.

"Yet they pleaſe us, while they dazzle," ſaid Lady Denmore: "they throw not a ſombre ſadneſs over our path; they make our days at leaſt ſupportable; and what in this tedious, weary life, can mortals hope for, beyond the power to beguile it of its ſorrows?"

"Then you live only for yourſelf?" ſaid my guardian.

"We cannot always live for thoſe we love," anſwered Lady Denmore.

"Nor can we blind thoſe whom we ſeek to deceive," retorted my guardian.

"A conſcious want of merit is ſharp-ſighted!" ſaid Lady Denmore.

"As a huſband's honour!" added my guardian. "But there are wives whoſe vigilance can eſcape even the lynx's watchfulneſs; while, by pretending ſuſpicions of a huſband's infidelity, they maſk the artifice which would conceal their own."

"My Lord, you grow incorrigible!" ſaid Lady Denmore: "Heaven knows, I have not *yet* violated the ſanctity of our union; my perſon has been yours."

"Your *heart*, madam—"

"That, at leaſt, I have a right to beſtow where inclination prompts me."

Lord

Lord Denmore's cheek turned pale. "I will ſoon decide this matter," ſaid he, with a voice ſcarcely articulate. "I will convince you, if you are awake to pride or ſenſibility, that you beſtow your partiality on one, who neither values nor deſires it; whoſe honour ſhudders at your indecorum; and whoſe friendſhip will, at all times, keep his paſſions in ſubjection." Lady Denmore ſmiled contemptuouſly. My guardian continued:

"Would to Heaven I had lived in thoſe unvitiated days, when women were ſincere, and men deſerving! when wives made domeſtic happineſs their ſtudy, and the honour of a huſband's name was their certificate for virtue and diſcretion; home was then a ſcene of tranquil joy, and mental graces the proudeſt claims for public approbation."

"Huſbands were then the guardians of their honour," ſaid Lady Denmore.

" They did not leave their treaſure expoſed to the artifice of more faſcinating objects. They did not paſs their nights in clubs, their days with wantons; they were not aſhamed of domeſtic virtue; neglectful of domeſtic happineſs. What is the new ſyſtem of refinement? A ſpell which deadens all the nobleſt paſſions of the human heart; which annihilates affection, pity, feeling, ſentiment, eſteem, and confidence. In their place we are taught to cheriſh deceit, indifference, vanity, contempt, and ſcorn; we cannot bear neglect, becauſe it awakens our ſelf-love; we think not of the natural fickleneſs of man; but we tremble, leſt the world ſhould ſuppoſe, that a huſband's infidelity proceeds from our own want of attractions to hold him faithful. We pine in icy languor; we ſhrink from the ridicule of the invidious; while no cure for wedded ſorrow remains,

mains, but that which reſts on a divorce, or a broken heart; the one for the raſh and daring boſom; the other for the mind of timid ſenſibility."

"This is the ſophiſtry of libertines," cried my guardian, "not the argument of reaſon."

"Pardon me, my Lord, but it is the language of nature," ſaid Lady Denmore. "And if huſbands now have reaſon to complain, they may thank themſelves for their own deſtructive follies. We were born to be the aſſociates, not the ſlaves of man: and it is more than unreaſonable to expect, that while our domeſtic Lords ſeek for happineſs abroad, they can ſecure their fame at home. While they grow bold in the defence of vice, and timid in the cauſe of virtue, how can they hope that a weak, frail, feeling, and neglected woman has power to oppoſe deception,

or to reſiſt the pleaſures of a world on which ſhe is thrown defenceleſs?"

"Women ſhould avoid temptation," cried the Ducheſs.

"There would be yet another ſource of danger," ſaid Lady Denmore: "the ridicule of her contemporaries. A woman may reſiſt the eloquence of love; the flattery of a lover; the allurements of diſſipation; and the force of pernicious example; but there never yet exiſted that female, whoſe heart was warmed by ſenſibility, or whoſe boſom beat with indignation at a huſband's neglect, who could bear the humiliation of being laughed at."

"When women are ill-treated, they claim the pity of every feeling mind," ſaid the Ducheſs.

"That pity is the bane of virtue," replied Lady Denmore. "The libertine who wiſhes to ſeduce, or the friend who

who ſeeks to humble the deſerted heart, firſt talks of pity, then of *revenge*."

My guardian ſtarted. Lady Denmore's tone of voice was menacing; her look expreſſive. The Ducheſs reddened; I felt for each alternately.

"Harriet! you make me ſhudder!" ſaid her Grace. "In what has Lord Denmore offended? in what inſtance has he violated the laws of domeſtic propriety, that you ſhould ſo ſeverely, ſo pointedly addreſs ſuch words to him? Remember, at leaſt, that he is your huſband, and that whatever private feelings may actuate your mind, there is yet ſomething due to public appearances."

"What has the public to do with the actions of an individual," ſaid Lady Denmore: "and who has a right to arraign me at its tribunal, while Lord Denmore ſanctions my conduct."

"That

"That I know to be the received opinion," replied the Ducheſs. "It does not, nevertheleſs, ſhield a meanly paſſive huſband from the contempt of a diſcriminating world; while by drawing on him that additional ſtigma, a wife only adds to the enormity of her folly. Yet if I miſtake not, Lord Denmore will not bear his diſgrace with that patience, which has been exemplified by ſome modern domeſtic appendages."

"He may ſoon be releaſed from the evil, if he places indifference in the liſt of domeſtic improprieties," anſwered her Ladyſhip.

"Will his reſolution reſtore to you that reputation which will be loſt by ſuch a ſtep?" cried the Ducheſs. "Will not reaſon ſcrutinize your motives, and the virtues of Lord Denmore plead in conviction of your guilt?"

"Thoſe who love, have little to do with reaſon; and that world which contributes

tributes nothing to my happineſs, has no right to augment my miſery," ſaid Lady Denmore burſting into tears. My guardian's indignation which had been provoked evidently to the extent of his patience, for a moment ſeemed to forget the abſurdity of his wife's conduct, and taking her hand with ſtifled emotion, "Harriet," ſaid he, "you know that I cannot reſiſt your tears. You ſhall not, you muſt not cheriſh this ill-judging animoſity towards one who is incapable of conſpiring againſt your happineſs. You know that you have all my heart; and you ſhould likewiſe feel, that it would be unworthy of your acceptance were it debaſed by an inhuman action."

"Keep your heart, my Lord, for thoſe who will value it," ſaid Lady Denmore. "Heaven knows I never ſought the treaſure." My guardian reddened; every vein in my boſom throbbed

throbbed in uniſon with his. So generous, ſo amiable a mortal, ſo ſcorned, ſo inſulted, would have awakened ſympathy even in a ſtranger's breaſt.

"We will drop this ſubject," ſaid Lady Denmore: "for it muſt be obnoxious to you," ſpeaking to my guardian, "becauſe it is evidently painful to Miſs St. Leger."

The Ducheſs again ſhook her head; I trembled at the augmenting altercation, and yet I knew not how to end it. After a ſilence of ſome minutes, my guardian addreſſed me. "You have been particularly unfortunate," ſaid he, "in not having the power to pleaſe Lady Denmore. But there are reſtleſs ſpirits which are not to be charmed by any thing; and which delight in expoſing themſelves, merely for the pleaſure of tormenting others."

"Inſolent tyrant!" exclaimed Lady Denmore.

"Unreaſonable

"Unreaſonable woman!" retorted my guardian. "What new triumph does your capricious heart demand?"

"It has hitherto been the ſlave; it is time that it ſhould be the victor," anſwered her Ladyſhip. My guardian bit his lip, and grew pale with indignation. Lady Denmore continued:

"Since then you ſo openly and ſo indecently eſpouſe the cauſe of a preſuming hypocrite, I will convince her that my will ſhall be ſuperior to your folly. She ſhall not reſide at the Caſtle at all during our abſence; ſhe ſhall return to Ireland."

"She ſhall go where ſhe pleaſes," cried my guardian. "My home, my fortune, even my name, ſhall henceforth be her's, if ſhe chooſes to adopt it."

"Then it ſhall be mine no longer," ſaid Lady Denmore.

"You are welcome to keep it, madam, on one condition only; that you never dare

dare disgrace it." So saying, my guardian rushed out of the room, and I sunk upon the Duchess's bosom completely wretched.

"Harriet! are you frantic?" cried her Grace: "are you determined to sever all the bonds of social happiness? Do you presume on Lord Denmore's forbearance; and vainly suppose that he submits through the fear of losing your affections, or because he dreads your power to rule him? A man of feeling will endure much from a beloved object; the charm of domestic quiet will make him passive for a time: but when once he is roused to oppose his tyrant, he will soon find means to vanquish."

"Lord Denmore dares not urge me," said Lady Denmore.

"A husband's rights are infinite," replied the Duchess: "and we but prove our folly, when we seek to govern. For, by usurping a despotic sceptre, we only

only graſp a poiſon that will deſtroy us."

"The world will commend my courage in reſiſting ſuch a tyrant."

"The world will deſpiſe a woman who exerciſes an overbearing ſpirit, in oppoſition to a worthy, an indulgent huſband," replied the Ducheſs; "and if he continues paſſive, your diſgrace will be complete. He will be pitied for the ill-judging mildneſs of his nature; and you condemned as a tyrant and a vixen."

"I deſpiſe Lord Denmore," ſaid her Ladyſhip.

"Then you deſpiſe the beſt of mortals," replied the Ducheſs; "the moſt liberal and humane of men!"

"He was the object of your Grace's choice," retorted Lady Denmore: "and therefore you defend him. If I have preſerved my honour hitherto inviolate, it has been more from a ſenſe of pride and

and of delicacy, than from an impulſe of affection. I hate Lord Denmore."

"Oh God!" exclaimed I involuntarily: "hate him! Is that poſſible?"

"My mother beheld with what reluctance I beſtowed my hand," ſaid Lady Denmore. "My heart was at that dreadful moment another's, and ſhe knew it! She was no ſtranger to my anguiſh, to my deſpair; and yet ſhe ſaw me ſacrifice my hopes, my youth, my happineſs,—merely to gratify an empty falſe ambition. Whom can ſhe blame?—Herſelf."

The Ducheſs burſting into tears, faintly replied, "It is too true! I ſtand convicted; *I* alone am culpable."

Her diſtreſs, her venerable figure, her tears, her countenance expreſſively conſcious of her error, wrung my boſom. I threw myſelf on my knees, and folding my arms about her, kiſſed her with a child's affection.

Lady

Lady Denmore leaned her head againſt the chimney-piece, and wept abundantly: her heart ſeemed over-charged with grief, and ſhe gave herſelf up to the moſt ungovernable agitation. I commiſerated her deſtiny; I pitied her, Frances; while I forgot or rather forgave, her former inſults and contempt.

"Let me conjure you," ſaid I, "to tranquillize your ſpirits. Lord Denmore will think no more on what has paſſed when *I* am gone. My abſence will ſecure your peace of mind; and, whatever I may ſuffer, I will bear my fate with reſignation, ſince it will reſtore you to happineſs." As I ſpoke my guardian again entered the room. For a moment he ſeemed affected by Lady Denmore's diſtreſs; he beheld her with a ſtruggle betwixt pride and pity, and forcibly ſummoning his reſolution, though evidently in oppoſition to his feelings, turned abruptly from her.

"Gertrude,"

"Gertrude," ſaid he, "I have now only to apologize for the unkindneſs you have experienced; to lament the caprices of thoſe who have diſtreſſed you; to confeſs your claims on my future protection; and to bid you once more farewell." I heard him, but my attention being ſtill directed towards Lady Denmore, I made no anſwer. He continued:

"You will find that I have left an order with my banker to pay you five hundred pounds: you will want clothes and pocket-money. I have alſo requeſted a friend, in whom I can confide, and whom you will ſoon learn to value, to viſit you frequently; to ſee that you have every degree of reſpectful attention paid to you by the domeſtics at the Caſtle, and to conduct you ſafely thither."

He now obſerved the Ducheſs, and inſtantly exclaimed, "Heavens! madam,

dam, do I ſee you in tears? Cannot ſuch worth, ſuch ineſtimable worth as yours eſcape chagrin? Who has occaſioned this diſtreſs? Tell me, I conjure you."

"Myſelf!" ſighed the Ducheſs faintly. My guardian took her hand and kiſſed it.

"Excellent woman!" ſaid he ardently. "Your tears unman me; I cannot bear to witneſs them. Harriet," continued Lord Denmore, turning towards his wife, who was abſorbed in the ſtupor of ſorrow, "conſole your mother, your amiable mother! Let her affliction melt your heart, if her precepts cannot mend it. Neglect, inſult me as you will, but forget not the reſpect you owe to her virtues. For my own fate, I care but little; a ſhort period will decide all that is important to its happineſs. I have trifled till I bluſh at my own inſignificance: I have been tamely

tamely yielding, till forbearance has ſhrunk into debaſement. This hour muſt terminate my domeſtic peace, or my diſhonour." I trembled. The tone of his voice was ſternly deciſive: and I knew that when once rouſed to reſentment, his anger was implacable.

A ſervant now opened the door, and Mr. Treville, with an obſequious mien, entered the room.

"My friend," ſaid Lord Denmore, "I have to requeſt a favour which I hope you will not refuſe me."

Mr. Treville bowed, and anſwered, "You may command me."

"I have determined to repoſe in your honour, a truſt of the moſt ſacred nature," ſaid Lord Denmore. "Nothing leſs than the office of guardian to Miſs St. Leger, during my abſence from England."

His words electrified my heart: Lady Denmore ſtarted, and then ſtood tranſ-

fixed with aſtoniſhment. I roſe from the Ducheſs's feet where I had been kneeling and endeavouring to ſooth her; and, with an inarticulate voice, inquired of Lord Denmore whether he was really ſerious.

"Perfectly ſo," was his laconic anſwer.

I again turned my eyes towards Lady Denmore. Her countenance changed; ſhe became deathly pale; her lips entirely loſt their colour. Mr. Treville ſeemed to enjoy the important triumph, and bowing to me with a ſupercilious ſmile, aſſured me, "that he never had felt himſelf ſo highly honoured as at that moment."

"You are right, Sir," ſaid I contemptuouſly: "and I lament the evident cauſe of your preſent gratification; while I ſincerely hope that it will be tranſient."

"I do not comprehend you," ſaid Lord Denmore.

"Then, my Lord, I muſt be more explicit," anſwered I: "and I truſt that you will not urge a further explanation, when I declare that I muſt and will decline the ſanction of Mr. Treville's protection."

"For what reaſon?" enquired my guardian, ſternly.

"I can protect myſelf."

Lady Denmore's boſom throbbed viſibly. Her languid eyes watched mine; but ſhe did not utter a ſyllable.

"The ſacred office which you have allotted me," ſaid Mr. Treville, with affected gravity, "it ſhall be the ſtudy of my life to execute with honour. So fair, ſo amiable a charge, will claim all my attention. The defence of beauty and of virtue, will render the taſk of friendſhip doubly intereſting: and, Heaven knows! that in this world of profligate refinement, ſuch youth and lovelineſs ſhould be ſtrongly guarded."

"I truſt

"I truſt to your care a treaſure of the higheſt value," ſaid my guardian.

"A tempting treaſure!" repeated Mr. Treville: "but one that I will hold more precious than my life; more ſacred than my honour. One to whom I will devote myſelf; for whoſe improvement I will become a very recluſe." Lady Denmore drooped her head; I thought ſhe would have fainted.

"You will undertake the charge?" ſaid my guardian.

"Moſt faithfully," replied Mr. Treville, placing his hand upon his heart, and again bowing obſequiouſly.

"Gertrude," continued my guardian, "I truſt that you will merit my future eſteem, by repoſing the moſt implicit confidence in the zeal and integrity of my friend. He may be ſomewhat of a coxcomb; but he is alſo a man of honour. He is vain of his perſonal

merit; but he alſo knows the value of moral rectitude." Then, addreſſing Mr. Treville with a half ſmile, he added, "Mind, my worthy fellow, how you conduct yourſelf. Gertrude is a lovely girl, and, with all her valuable qualities of mind, would make an excellent parſon's wife. I ſhall not be abſent more than twelve months: prove yourſelf worthy of her heart, and my conſent ſhall not be wanting."

"I ſcarcely dare to hope," ſaid Mr. Treville, taking my hand, and reſpectfully preſſing it to his lips. I withdrew it ſuddenly; and with an indignant frown replied, "Hope is ſeldom cheriſhed beyond the bounds of probability."

"I will deſerve your eſteem," ſaid Mr. Treville. "Though I may not aſpire to the honour of your affections, ſanctioned by Lord Denmore's approbation,

bation, I feel too highly flattered to reſign the proſpect of ſuch tranſcendent happineſs."

"Treville!" ſaid my guardian, interrupting him, "if ſhe values my regard, ſhe will be yours." I felt like one that was lightning-ſtruck. Lady Denmore ruſhed out of the room, but my limbs had not the power of motion.

My aſtoniſhment was only to be equalled by my chagrin. I knew that Lord Denmore, with all his penetration, had ever been the dupe of Mr. Treville's hypocriſy. I had obſerved him, in the preſence of his patron, acting an unceaſing ſcene of deception, and perpetually aſſuming a character the oppoſite of that which Nature had given him, and which habits of profligacy had confirmed unequivocally. I had frequently wondered at his ingenuity, in blinding ſo acute an obſerver of mankind; and the conviction of his ſucceſs proved,

inconteſtibly, that the wiſeſt, without a particular ſpecies of art, are often the dupes even of the moſt ignorant.

I ſtood rapt in thought, till my guardian's voice again rouſed me to attention. "You are almoſt a ſtranger to the world, Gertrude," ſaid he; "and you have rather too haſtily formed your opinion of its inhabitants: you have ſeen a Upas, and you fancy that all objects are equally pernicious. My friend Treville is perhaps too volatile in his manners; but it is the effect of high ſpirits and a clear conſcience. I, who know him, can rely upon his honour." Mr. Treville bowed again. "If I could not," continued my guardian, "he would not have been the intimate of my family. But if any farther proofs of my confidence are neceſſary, I will avow another reaſon for confiding in him the office of a guardian. I have reſolved on preſenting him the living of Denmore: it is

worth

worth ſeven hundred pounds a-year, with a comfortable parſonage, and ſome acres of land for cultivation. Thus becoming your neighbour, who can ſo conſtantly attend to your commands, promote your felicity, and protect you from every ſpecies of peril?

"My Lord, your liberality is boundleſs," cried Mr. Treville.

"Nay, thank me not," interrupted my guardian: "I owe you ſomething, for having robbed you of a wife: a time may come, when I may preſent you one equally amiable, and no leſs lovely." The Ducheſs now quitted the apartment, and I haſtened to find Lady Denmore.

She was in her dreſſing-room, in an agony of grief. I knocked at the door; and on her bidding me enter, I found her with looks wild and diſtracted.

"Gertrude," ſaid ſhe, "what is your determination reſpecting Mr. Treville? Be brief, and tell me candidly; for on

your deciſion hangs my thread of exiſtence."

"To reject him as my guardian," anſwered I firmly.

"And as your huſband?" added Lady Denmore.

"Moſt deciſively," ſaid I. She half ſmiled, breathed quick, and leaned upon my arm for ſupport.

"But you will reſide at the Caſtle; you will ſee him as a friend?"

"I know not how to avoid it," anſwered I with a doubtful heſitation.

"It muſt be avoided. Oh God!" exclaimed Lady Denmore, "I cannot ſurvive this trial!" Then, taking my hand, with a ſoftened tone, ſhe added, "You ſee me, Gertrude, the moſt unfortunate of women. You ſee me humbled by my ſorrows, and bowed to the very earth by the anticipation of new griefs. If you ever felt the agony of hopeleſs affection; if ever your heart

heart beat with the extacy of hope, or ſhivered with the horrors of deſpair, you will know what I now ſuffer." Her tears interrupted her; ſhe ſobbed like an infant during ſeveral minutes, and then proceeded:

"I conjure you not to reſide at the Caſtle during our abſence, but to return to Ireland. Lord Denmore will ſcarcely refuſe any requeſt that you can make; and your acquieſcence will perhaps be the means of preſerving me from perdition. I could not ſurvive your union with Mr. Treville;—I would not."

"Alas! how ſhall I convince you, that no earthly power ſhall compel me to be his?" ſaid I. "Inſtruct me, and I will obey you."

Lady Denmore pauſed, and looked deſpondingly. "I know not how to expect ſuch generoſity, after what has paſſed," ſaid ſhe: "but now you hear my motive, I truſt that you will pity

me. Since my marriage with Lord Denmore, ſince that fatal hour when I gave him my hand, to prove my obedience to the Ducheſs's commands, I have never known one day of happineſs. It is true, my Lord has treated me with kindneſs, with attention; but our minds are differently organized: my boſom is fervid in its ſenſations; his, alas! is coldly philoſophic: he is a reaſoning being, I am a mere woman; his love is ſentiment, mine is idolatry. Perhaps you do not know the diſtinction: you have not ſcrutinized the heart, or analyzed its feelings. You have not yet learnt how to love!" I ſighed deeply. "Or you have hopes that your affection will be requited," continued Lady Denmore. "You are not deſtined to waſte your youth in a conſtrained obedience; to ſee your early proſpects deſtroyed; to feel the eternal pangs of jealouſy—"

"Tell

"Tell me how I can obey you," ſaid I: "my heart is the convert of your ſorrows. I feel it throbbing with a ſympathy, which devotes it to your ſervice. Command, and I will execute your orders, at the peril of my exiſtence."

"Then promiſe, that you will never again ſee Mr. Treville; that you will return to Ireland."

"Lord Denmore will ſcarcely pardon me," ſaid I.

"Fear nothing," interrupted ſhe: "my fortune is partly at my own diſpoſal; I will ſecure you an ample independence. Say that you will grant me this indulgence. What is Lord Denmore's diſpleaſure in compariſon with the happineſs or life of a fellow-creature?"

"I cannot, dare not diſobey him."

"Then you love Mr. Treville! It is evident you love him, and I muſt be the victim."

"Indeed I do not," ſaid I. "But how dare I repay my guardian's kindneſs ſo unworthily, and yet hope that the world will not reproach me? I ſhall be conſidered as a monſter of ingratitude."

"See Mr. Treville, perſuade him to refuſe the charge which my Lord has impoſed on him," ſaid Lady Denmore with increaſed emotion. "He has not yet quitted the houſe: he waits, O Gertrude! he waits to be the companion of your journey; to ſeal my miſery, my fate for ever." Her agonizing tears, her anguiſh-ſtricken features, pale and diſtorted by contending conflicts, ſpoke to the heart, and I was overwhelmed with perplexity. At this moment we heard Lord Denmore's foot upon the ſtairs. He entered the room, and I ruſhed by him to obey his wife's injunctions, my limbs trembling, and my heart convulſed with palpitation.

I found

I found Mr. Treville in the breakfaſt-room, in a profound reverie. There was no time to loſe: the hour rapidly approached, when I was deſtined to decide the fate of one, whoſe ſituation too nearly reſembled my own, not to excite my ſympathy. With a degree of reſolution ſcarcely natural to me, I inſtantly unfolded the purpoſe of my ſeeking him. "I truſt that you will ſcarcely, notwithſtanding all that had paſſed, conſpire againſt my happineſs," ſaid I; "that you will refuſe the charge propoſed by Lord Denmore; and permit me to decline the protection he has offered."

"Lord Denmore will not accept the reſignation," ſaid Mr. Treville: "and I fear that even my propoſal to relinquiſh an office ſo important, will eternally offend him. Weigh well this circumſtance, and aſk your own heart, whether I ſhould act wiſely in riſking the loſs of a true

a true friend, to gratify the jealouſy of a capricious woman."

"You gueſs the cauſe then?" ſaid I.

"I have always known Lady Denmore's childiſh partiality," replied he, with an affected tone. "But it is not my fault: the error muſt be placed to the account of Nature."

"I cannot, I am determined that I will not, receive you as my guardian," ſaid I: "therefore, to avoid all further explanations, I adviſe you to give the refuſal the appearance of your own voluntary wiſh. I want no guide, no counſellor; I can defend myſelf; and my conduct will be irreproachable." Theſe words were uttered in a tone at once firm and indignant. Mr. Treville was little prepared for a declaration ſo decided. He looked confounded and ſurpriſed; and after forming a variety of grimaces, which evinced his diſcontent,

diſcontent, with an air of ridiculous importance he again addreſſed me:

"The taſk is certainly not the moſt deſirable," ſaid he. "I neither ſought, nor wiſhed to undertake it. The pedantic occupation of guarding ſuch frozen chaſtity, but ill accords with the ardent glow of my imagination. The cold inanimate boſom of Lord Denmore may teach him to contemplate beauty with a Stoic's fortitude; but I was born to love, and to be loved. Time has no feather in his wing which I have not loaded with trophies. To dull and frigid boſoms, life may be a burthen; but I find every day too ſhort for my extenſive round of pleaſures."

"Then you ſhall not interrupt their progreſs, by an occupation ſo little ſuited to your nature," ſaid I.

"In truth, Gertrude, I would rather win you, than watch you," replied Mr. Treville.

Treville. "But if I am deſtined to guard the forbidden fruit, I truſt that in time I ſhall be permitted to taſte it."

There was a look of profligate aſſurance on his countenance while he ſpoke, which diſguſted me, and at the ſame time unequivocally indicated the meaning of his words. Had Lady Denmore ſeen him at that moment, notwithſtanding the fatal faſcination of her heart, ſhe would have hated him. The vanity of a lover is the beſt ſafeguard for the object whom he addreſſes: for who that has reaſon or diſcernment, will credit a being that has not prudence to conceal even his own imperfections? You will ſay that reaſon and diſcernment vaniſh before the omnipotence of love; I will not inveſtigate the myſtery, leſt I ſhould find myſelf miſtaken: but I will boldly aſſert, that the woman who can love ſuch a man as Mr. Treville, is unworthy of being beloved

beloved by a mortal like Lord Denmore.

Finding that Mr. Treville perſevered in an obſtinate and pretended indifference in what ſo nearly concerned Lady Denmore, and knowing that the moment would ſoon arrive when every hope would vaniſh from her boſom, I was tempted to ſpeak ſtill more plainly. "If you value my repoſe, or the exiſtence of an amiable, though miſguided woman," ſaid I, "you will inſtantly demand an interview with my guardian; form a plauſible excuſe, (for you will find no difficulty in diſſembling,) and, without farther procraſtination, refuſe the office."

"You counſel ably, my lovely monitreſs," ſaid Mr. Treville laughing, "and I feel that your perſuaſive powers are ſcarcely to be reſiſted. I have therefore no objection to meet you half way in this important negociation; promiſe

promiſe that you will reward me handſomely, and, however it may be repugnant to my feelings, I will endeavour to obey you."

"It is for Lady Denmore's happineſs that I now plead," ſaid I. "The motive requires little interpretation, for your vanity has long ſince elucidated the myſtery. The *nonchalance* of your preſent conduct too plainly evinces the humiliation of Lady Denmore; I commiſerate her weakneſs; I deſpiſe your barbarity; and from this hour, I will make it the labour of my life, to fortify her boſom againſt the influence of an idol ſo unworthy." I was quitting the room when Mr. Treville caught my hand, and, with a fluſh of evident reſentment, requeſted me to hear him.

"Be brief then," ſaid I; "for I am little diſpoſed to trifle."

"What does Lady Denmore wiſh? and on what plea does ſhe aſſume a right

right over my conduct?" ſaid he haughtily. "Before a woman preſumes to govern, ſhe ſhould be well aſſured that her power is equal to her inclination."

"You know that Lady Denmore's happineſs or miſery depends on you," anſwered I; "and being conſcious of your influence over her feelings, you ſhould endeavour to uſe it with diſcretion. Sooth her perturbed imagination, but ſeek not to contaminate her mind: ſhe is the vaſſal of her ſenſes; her days are waſted in a perpetual ſtruggle between the moral duties and the affections of her heart. Time and fortitude may ſubdue the conflict: do not precipitate a trembling, fearful mortal from the margin of deſpair."

"You plead moſt eloquently!" ſaid Mr. Treville, ſmiling.

"I plead for ſuffering ſenſibility," anſwered I; "and torpid muſt that boſom

boſom be, which cannot ſympathize in ſuch a cauſe."

"Your zeal is perfectly diſintereſted at leaſt," ſaid Mr. Treville: "for, to my knowledge, Lady Denmore is your enemy."

"I can forgive her injuſtice, when I recollect her ſorrow," anſwered I.

"If I were certain, that you would be grateful, I would obey your wiſhes; but women promiſe without diſcretion, becauſe they think themſelves authoriſed to deceive with impunity."

"I ſhall, I muſt confeſs the obligation."

"How ſhall I be convinced that you are ſincere in your intention?"

"By the claims you will have upon my gratitude," anſwered I.

"Gratitude is a frigid ſentiment, Gertrude," ſaid Mr. Treville: "it is at beſt but a conſtrained humility."

"It

"It is, in my opinion, the moſt glowing and generous tribute of the heart," anſwered I.

"That may be your opinion; but one ſpark of love is more likely to warm my breaſt, notwithſtanding," interrupted Mr. Treville. "Give to my boſom that more than Promethean touch, and its tenant ſhall be at your diſpoſal for ever."

"Lady Denmore would little thank you for a divided heart," ſaid I.

"There you are miſtaken," replied the ſubtle libertine. "I can love you both: and a little jealouſy would keep that flame alive, which would ſoon be extinguiſhed by an excluſive devotion." I ſhuddered at the profligacy of ſuch a declaration. I ſhuddered when I recollected that ſuch a being was the idol of a feeling, an exalted mind; that men of honour countenanced, and women, whoſe diſcrimination ſhould ſelect the worthy

worthy from the baſe, were duped by ſuch a profligate. Mr. Treville obſerved the ſilent indignation which ſtruggled in my breaſt, and with eaſy effrontery renewed the ſubject of converſation.

"I know you love me," ſaid he: "I have known it ever ſince your firſt arrival at Denmore Caſtle; and important have been the ſacrifices which I have made on your account. The captivating Emma Cecil has felt the effects of your ſuperior faſcinations; and if Lady Denmore's heart has experienced a diminution of repoſe, ſhe is alſo indebted to you, as the cauſe of her misfortune. Accept then the wreath of victory; and in your turn beſtow thoſe chains, which ſhall never ceaſe to hold your voluntary captive."

"Ridiculous!" exclaimed I. "How can you offer me dominion over your heart, while I am pleading for the happineſs of another object. Lady Den-

more's hopes, her life, will depend on my perſuaſions."

"Lady Denmore has trifled with my feelings ſo long, that ſhe now ſcarcely deſerves their intereſt," replied Mr. Treville coldly. Then turning towards the glaſs over the chimney, and contemplating his own figure with evident ſatisfaction, while his features aſſumed an unuſual caſt of ſelf-importance, he added: "But let me hear what ſhe has to propoſe; perhaps I may be inclined to return good for evil: women are raſh creatures, and I do not wiſh to have her death upon my conſcience."

I felt an indignant glow ruſh over my cheek, and was for a moment doubtful, whether annihilation would not be bliſs, in compariſon with the miſery of accepting life from ſuch a reptile. After a pauſe of ſeveral minutes, during which he continued to contemplate his own figure, Mr. Treville added:

"What

"What has Lady Denmore to ſay? Be brief, and let me know; for time is too precious to be waſted in abſurd preliminaries; and I am unwilling to gratify the tyranny of one woman, while fifty are languiſhing to bleſs me."

"Incorrigible vanity!" ſaid I. "But let Reaſon for once undeceive you; and be aſſured, that Lady Denmore's honour is at leaſt equal to her ſenſibility. The favour ſhe requeſts will not add a leaf to your wreath of victory. She merely deſires, that you will relinquiſh the charge impoſed on you by her huſband, —no more."

"On what terms?"

Having pauſed a minute, I replied, "I had not the temerity to aſk her."

"Then I will," ſaid Mr. Treville, taking his ſeat at Lord Denmore's *ſecretaire*, and beginning to write. He had only proceeded a few lines when my guardian entered the room. Mr. Treville's

ville's countenance exhibited no compunctious feelings, his cheek loſt nothing of its colour, his hand did not tremble: he was too deeply practiſed in diſſimulation to betray himſelf: "I am making a liſt of books, the only ſources of mental improvement, for my fair charge," ſaid he. I bluſhed. His features remained unaltered, and he continued:

"We muſt not omit any thing that can refine the judgment, or expand the heart. Religion and morality are rarely met with in theſe degenerate times; and the cultivation of both ſhould not be neglected. I therefore recommend this catalogue to your attention: it contains, among many other works of equal celebrity, Fordyce's Sermons, Hervey's Meditations, Beveridge on Prayer, Campbell on Moral Virtue, Maſon on Self-Knowledge, Sherlock on

Death, and Wollaſton's Religion of Nature."—

"Hold, Treville!" cried Lord Denmore. "Do not chill my young friend's genius by a too ſevere ſeries of mental occupations. Let her read rational, and at the ſame time amuſing books; let the faculties of thought unfold themſelves, and do not burthen them with abſtruſe or theological ſtudies. The youthful mind is apt to feel fatigued, when its labours are conſtrained, or unſuited to its fancy."

"Miſs St. Leger's fancy is too refined to bear a trifling occupation," replied Mr. Treville, with a ſarcaſtic tone: "ſhe is not deſtined to walk in the common track of life. The delicacy of her ſentiments, and the ingenuouſneſs of her temper, entitle her to move in a ſphere to which leſs enlightened ſouls cannot aſpire. She knows the female heart;

heart; and ſhe can correct its errors, at the ſame time that ſhe pities its ſenſibility."

"I do not queſtion her good ſenſe, or obſervation, which is its natural aſſociate," ſaid Lord Denmore. "I therefore recommend to her literary ſtudies hiſtory, eſſays, the beſt dramatic works, and the pureſt poetry."

"I will point out ſome of the moſt admired authors," ſaid Mr. Treville, again opening the paper, and beginning to write.

"You may add a few novels," ſaid Lord Denmore: "they are frequently written with elegance, and preſent juſt pictures of animated nature."

"The Fool of Quality," ſaid Mr. Treville, with a ſide glance, firſt at me, and then at Lord Denmore."

"Sir Charles Grandiſon," added Lord Denmore; "or Clariſſa."

"I have read them both," ſaid I; "and I have always thought, till lately,

that the character of Lovelace was out of nature. Mr. Treville reddened, as he preſented the folded letter. His effrontery almoſt petrified me with aſtoniſhment; the moſt practiſed libertine never evinced ſuch ſpecious hypocriſy, as he diſplayed in this critical dilemma. I bluſhed, as I put forth my hand to receive the paper, and trembled; for I felt a pang of conſcious reproof, even while I acquieſced in what I thought an innocent deception. Alas! Frances, had Lord Denmore's eyes at that moment encountered mine, I ſhould almoſt have expired with ſhame and compunction.

I now flew to Lady Denmore: ſhe ſnatched the paper with avidity, preſſed it to her lips, read the contents, and thanked me. I inſtantly perceived the effect which it had produced upon her feelings; and I forgot the diſgrace which the deception had ſtamped upon my

my conduct. She now took my hand.

"Gertrude," ſaid ſhe, ſmiling through her tears, "I breathe again! You have reſcued me from deſpair." She then pauſed, reflected, and ſeemed to ſhudder. I began to tremble, and to fear that I had involved her in guilt, no leſs painful than ſorrow. I left her once more, and returned to Mr. Treville. I found him in converſation with my guardian: the debate was profound and moral. I liſtened, till my preſence broke in upon their argument; and the chaiſe was once more announced for our departure. Now came the moment of deciſion.

Mr. Treville informed Lord Denmore, that buſineſs of the utmoſt importance would prevent his attending me to the Caſtle.

"A friend whom I value is labouring under infinite, nay almoſt incurable

diſtreſs of mind," ſaid he ſighing; "and you know, my dear Lord, that my heart is ever open to the unhappy. There is a pleaſure in doing good, to which you can be no ſtranger. I will, however, diſpatch this taſk of philanthropy as ſpeedily as poſſible; and, before you quit England, you will be convinced of my aſſiduity." As he ſlowly concluded this ſentence, laying a ſtrong emphaſis on the laſt part of it, he looked ſignificantly at me. Had Lord Denmore's eyes been equally vigilant, my bluſhes would have betrayed me; for I read a meaning in Mr. Treville's words, which made me ſhrink with apprehenſion.

"How are you to go alone, my love?" ſaid the Ducheſs, who had entered the room while Mr. Treville was ſpeaking. "You cannot travel without ſome ſort of protection; you will find it awkward to preſent yourſelf unattended at the Caſtle; the ſervants will not be aware of your

your viſit; and there will not be an apartment aired to receive you. What is to be done?" Lord Denmore meditated for a few moments.

"We muſt defer the journey till to-morrow," ſaid he. Mr. Treville ſmiled ſarcaſtically.

"Then I will be her companion," added the Ducheſs. "A change of air will be of ſervice to me; and I ſhall feel pleaſure in accompanying Miſs St. Leger, in the hope that ſociety may reconcile her to her abſence from her guardian." My heart beat high at the train of ideas which followed this remark, when the Ducheſs added, "She cannot go alone."

"Certainly not," cried Lady Denmore; "and ſince Mr. Treville's occupations prevent his attending her, I ſhall thank your Grace for the kindneſs you offer; for I agree with you, that ſhe cannot go alone."

"Impoſſible!" cried my guardian.

"Impoſſible!" repeated the Ducheſs, taking my hand, and ſmiling: "though," added ſhe, "the ſociety of an old woman is little better than no ſociety at all."

"All men are not of that opinion," ſaid Lord Denmore.

"Your Grace muſt pardon my differing with you," ſaid Mr. Treville. "Every admirer of virtue, and I truſt that my fair charge is one of that number, will acknowledge the delight to be derived from ſo moral, and, at the ſame time ſo poliſhed a companion. The perfections of Lady Denmore's mind are your Grace's vouchers that I do not flatter."

"My daughter's mind has been but little improved by her intercourſe with the world," ſaid the Ducheſs ſighing.

"Periſh the maxims which would contaminate ſuch goodneſs!" ſaid Mr. Treville.

"Ah,

"Ah, my friend!" cried Lord Denmore; "how few can feel or act as you do!" So saying, he rung the bell, and the chaise was once more sent from the door to the coach-house; the luggage still fastened to it, till further orders. Soon after dinner I embraced a leisure hour, to begin this long letter, which I now conclude at midnight. Adieu.

LETTER XL.

The Same to the Same.

Portman-Square, Sept. 28, 1796.

I HAVE been told that the blush of compunction originates in the reflections of an ingenuous and sensitive mind: the vicious and the unfeeling are alike unacquainted with its glow; shame is

the aſſociate of error; but where ſhame has power to agitate the ſoul, virtue is ſtill alive and leaning towards Reaſon. It is true, that by repeated acts of impropriety, the tacit reprover Conſcience loſes its power over the morals, and while the force of folly leads its votaries on to the commiſſion of guilt, the pure perceptions between real and artificial happineſs become opaque, till all diſcrimination is loſt in the deluſion of the ſenſes.

Theſe reflections aroſe gradually in my mind, in conſequence of the part I had acted between Mr. Treville and Lady Denmore. I knew that the former was a libertine of the moſt dangerous ſpecies; a diſſembling ſycophant; a being who hovered round the wealthy and the high-born, to poiſon domeſtic happineſs, and to tarniſh reputation under the ſacred habit of virtue and religion. A coxcomb by education; a deceiver

a deceiver by practice; a flatterer by profeſſion; and a profligate by nature.

On ſuch a being had Lady Denmore fixed her affections. The credulity of her early youth had been impoſed on by ſpecious appearances: what had been the weed of a miſguided fancy, or a falſe taſte, (which time and reflection might have exterminated,) by oppoſition, became rooted in her mind; and the chilling deſpondency of an unwedded heart encreaſed, in proportion as ſhe reflected that its vows were irrevocable.

From my childhood I knew Lord Denmore to be the beſt of mortals. If I loved him more than propriety would authorize, I felt conſcious that my affection, for I could give my attachment no other name, was pure, and the object of it deſerving. I then endeavoured to methodize my feelings; to place this, to the account of gratitude;

that, of eſteem; to weigh his claims in a ſcale with my own ſenſations. All the tacit ſophiſtry of reflection was ſummoned to aid the infatuation of the ſenſes. I thought that I could analyze the heart, and ſeparate its refined particles, ſentiment and friendſhip, from the groſſer paſſions. But alas! the eye of reaſon gazed through a deceptive medium; it was not the clear, the tempered radiance of truth which rendered my proſpects viſible, it was a parhelion luminary, a viſionary light, which rendered all things pleaſing that inclination choſe to ſanction. I queſtioned not my heart to aſcertain its errors, but to ſtrengthen its weakneſs; I only explored the chaos of the mind to give it order, and to ſyſtemize its paſſions by the ſtrong rule of inclination.

This philoſophizing ſpirit is the moſt dangerous that can be encouraged; we reſt

reſt ſatisfied that our conduct is within the pale of morality; we endeavour to unite the pleaſures of imagination with the proprieties of exiſtence. We cheriſh motives the moſt deſtructive, by giving them a pompous name, or allowing their claim upon our feelings. Hence ariſe the miſchiefs of platonic attachments; the refinements of affection, falſely named friendſhip, between the ſexes. If we permit one object to influence every thought, to control every ſentiment, to uſurp an undivided dominion over our ſubjugated faculties, to become abſolutely neceſſary to our repoſe, whether that object be the lover or the friend is of little importance; he holds the reins of government over our ſenſes; and if we are not the victims of his inclinations, we owe more to their rationality than to our own vaunted powers of reſiſtance. Alas, Frances! that woman who would preſerve her heart immaculate,

culate, her mind uncontaminated, ſhould not ſtep beyond the frigid barrier of indifference; the moment ſhe admits to her boſom, thoſe ſpecious inmates, pity, ſympathy, and friendſhip, ſhe approaches that precipice from which ſhe will inevitably fall—to periſh.

Thus I reaſon, at a moment when I feel conſcious that my fault is irremediable. I have advanced too near the margin of deſtruction to retreat, and I have no remedy to deaden compunction, but in death. The events, the emotions of the laſt twelve hours, have convinced me that I ſtand upon a quickſand which will inevitably wreck my hopes of happineſs. All around is wild and tempeſtuous! I look back upon the tranquil ſhores where I enjoyed repoſe, becauſe I was unconſcious of the tyrant paſſions; my reaſon trembles while I contemplate the abyſs before me, while fate preſents only *one*

ſubterfuge

ſubterfuge from the anguiſh of deſpair. Oh God! how terrible is that ſtate of mind which ſhrinks from introſpection!

I have paſſed the whole morning in rumination. I have endeavoured to convict myſelf of error, with the hope that reflection would puniſh my deviation from propriety. But alas! the power of reaſon over the ſenſes is loſt for ever. I have nouriſhed the poiſon till it has pervaded the innermoſt receſſes of my heart, till it has infected the ſource of thought, placed a ſpell upon the fancy, and contracted the mental ſight, ſo that it can behold no other object. I will write again to-morrow.—Adieu.

LETTER XLI.

The Same to the Same.

Sept. 30, 1796.

YESTERDAY evening Lady Denmore gave a concert; the party was ſelect, and the muſic enchanting. My guardian did not enter the circle till near ſupper-time; and then ſo gloomily reſerved in manner, that every perſon preſent remarked it. Lady Denmore was apparently gay; but I could obſerve at times a ſombre caſt over her mind, which gave more than gravity to her features. Lord and Lady Melcomb were preſent; the Lady to ſhew her diamonds; the Lord to exhibit his muſical abilities, which the inceſſant labour of twenty years had finiſhed to perfection. Lady Upas was alſo of the party:

party: but Sir Hector, ſince his unlucky detection, and abrupt departure from Brighthelmſtone, has been confined at Bath with a nervous fever.

It was near midnight when Mr. Treville entered the room. His countenance, notwithſtanding its aſſumed gravity, indicated a ſecret triumph, the cauſe of which was unknown to all preſent but Lady Denmore. To her he paid more than decorous attention, till the arrival of my guardian; from that moment his civilities were excluſively directed to me. Every perſon in the circle obſerved his conduct; while many nods and ſmiles betrayed ſuſpicions, that ſuch marked and ſingular aſſiduity meant more than the mere politeneſs of good-breeding. At length I perceived an uneaſineſs in Lady Denmore's looks, a peeviſhneſs in her voice, and a progreſſive coldneſs in Mr. Treville's manner, which proved the power ſhe poſſeſſed

poſſeſſed over his feelings: the matrimonial propoſal obliquely made by my guardian to Mr. Treville excited my abhorrence, and I ſcarcely addreſſed a ſyllable to him during the time that he remained in the concert-room. All theſe circumſtances combined, made conjecture buſy; and every individual preſent entertained that opinion which was moſt congenial to his or her wiſhes on the ſubject. Lord Denmore again quitted the room.

As a reputation may be whiſpered away; and as inſinuation is capable of as much real miſchief as direct calumny, I took particular care to evince not only my diſguſt, but my abhorrence of Mr. Treville's attentions. To Lady Upas I expreſſed both the one and the other; and ſhe uniformly acquieſced with me in my deteſtation of his character. Lady Melcomb overheard ſome expreſſions of mine, and with an invidious ſatiſfaction

faction repeated them to Lady Denmore; with many vulgar remarks on "the arrogance and ſelf-conceit of inexperienced girls, who knew nothing of poliſhed life; and who ſhould be taught to feel their own inſignificance! but," added her Ladyſhip, "it is no difficult taſk to diſcover who ſpoils the poor thing: and were Lord Melcomb to act ſo ridiculous a part, I ſhould take deciſive ſteps to terminate the buſineſs." Mr. Treville looked ſignificantly at Lady Denmore, and affected to ſigh deeply.

"Folly muſt be conſpicuous, when even the dulleſt can obſerve it!" ſaid he, in a loud whiſper; "and to be the object of an idiot's pity, is indeed humiliating."

"It ſhall ſoon end," replied Lady Denmore. "I am now determined." Lady Melcomb again addreſſed her.

"How

"How comes it that Lord Denmore is abſent? I ſhould at leaſt have expected to find him at home this evening."

"For what reaſon?" ſaid I.

"I underſtood that *you* were to depart to-morrow," replied her Ladyſhip. Again Mr. Treville glanced at Lady Denmore.

"Perhaps he is not in ſpirits," ſaid he: "the wiſeſt of us cannot at all times command our feelings."

"Nor the greateſt hypocrite his malevolence," cried I.

"What an inquiſitor is conſcience!" ſaid Lady Denmore.

"How unguarded is innocence!" added Lady Melcomb, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile which gave additional force to the irony of her expreſſion. Mr. Treville laughed inſultingly; while I, no longer able to endure their inuendos, quitted the ſcandalous trio, and took my ſeat at the

the other end of the room. In a few moments my guardian returned, and inſtantly approaching me, inquired whether I had been amuſed, and how I liked the concert.

Vexed at his attention, becauſe I knew that it would excite farther comments to my diſadvantage, I ſcarcely anſwered him: he took his ſeat beſide me, and, unconſcious of the mirth which he excited at the oppoſite corner of the apartment, began to converſe with me on various ſubjects. The embarraſſment which reddened my cheek, to my obſervers exhibited a confirmation of imprudence; for they naturally concluded, that Lord Denmore's words were ſtrongly impreſſive, to excite a ſuffuſion ſo deep and ſo unconquerable. Still I was determined not to gratify their malice by ſeeming to feel its effects: I endeavoured to ſmile; I affected:

affected an air of vivacity; made incoherent remarks on the dreſs and manners of ſeveral perſons preſent; returned vague anſwers to Lord Denmore's queſtions; and trifled the time away, till the muſic recommenced, and relieved me from my dilemma.

At ſupper Lord Denmore placed his chair next to mine. Again the murmur and the gaze went round. Lady Melcomb could not attend to any other objects: her unmeaning eyes aſſumed a broader circle, and whenever they met Lady Denmore's, they betrayed the miſchievous meaning of her attention. Mr. Treville, who ſat on my right hand, was zealouſly eager to anticipate my wiſhes, watching my guardian's eyes and courting his approbation. Thus did this Proteus change his conduct with every circumſtance that favoured his deſign: one moment the ſlave of

Lady

Lady Denmore; the next the ſubtle betrayer of her credulous huſband.

My ſpirits were much depreſſed, and Mr. Treville's hypocriſy tended ſtill more to fatigue them. Whenever my eyes encountered thoſe of my guardian, and the trial was more frequent than diſcreet, an undeſcribable ſenſation ſeemed to thrill through my heart. Ah, Frances! how little do we know ourſelves, when we ſuppoſe that ſilence can conceal our thoughts from thoſe who are accuſtomed to charm, and practiſed in the power to vanquiſh. Lord Denmore has been too long the idol of every feeling boſom, to be deceived by the aſſumed indifference of one who has been educated in the ſchool of Nature.

The converſation at ſupper, though neither refined nor intereſting, was lively and amuſing. Much ſmall-talk and little wit; the occurrences of the day, the decreaſing conſequence of the

high world, and the encreaſing preſumption of the low, formed topics for much animadverſion.

Lord Denmore was ſilent and thoughtful: his mind ſeemed oppreſſed with a weight of uneaſineſs; and his countenance was marked with the extreme of melancholy. I aſked him frequently, by looks, why he was unhappy. He avoided my inquiſitive gaze, and on its repetition grew more uneaſy. Lady Denmore was in high ſpirits, ſhe talked and ſmiled with a vivacity nearly approaching to levity. While Mr. Treville, the maſter of ſimulation, preached moral virtue with all the zeal of a reformer.

The Ducheſs retired immediately after ſupper, ſaying as ſhe quitted the room, "Do not forget, my dear Gertrude, that we are to riſe early." Lord Denmore ſighed: and I anſwered the ſignal from the heart involuntarily.

Shortly

Shortly after, the company began to depart. My guardian, who had, during the whole evening complained of indiſpoſition, firſt taking occaſion to whiſper that he ſhould ſee me early in the morning, ſtole away to his chamber. As ſoon as he quitted the room, I felt alone; my eyes were during many minutes fixed towards the door; and my heart throbbed with a preſentiment of ſorrow. Impreſſive and fatal was the intuitive ſenſation; I cannot deſcribe it; but I have never failed to feel an inquietude of a ſimilar nature, when any event of importance menaced my tranquillity.

Lady Denmore, Mr. Treville, and myſelf, were now only left at table; I felt that there was much impropriety in his remaining after the reſt of the party had diſperſed, but as the converſation was purely correct, and the hour not indecorouſly late, I did no venture to

propoſe a ſeparation. Thus ſituated, the buzz of words, and the laſſitude of my exhauſted ſpirits, ſoon overpowered me; and I fell aſleep, before I was even conſcious of drowſineſs.

I did not awake till broad day-light; and you will judge of my undeſcribable conſternation, mingled with a ſorrow that was poignant, when I found myſelf alone. The candles were burnt to the ſockets; the table in the ſame ſtate of diſorder as when I fell aſleep; and on it I perceived a note, directed with a pencil to me. I haſtened towards the window, drew back the curtain, and in a few moments, to my unutterable conſternation and chagrin, read as follows:

'Accept our thanks, kind and ami-
'able Gertrude, for the aid which you
'have afforded us, in the completion of
'our wiſhes. Such an opportunity to
'eſcape from domeſtic miſery was not

'to

'to be loſt: we fly to happier ſcenes;
'to proſpects more congenial to liberty
'and love.—Adieu.'

"Then!" exclaimed I, while the paper fell from my hand, "my diſgrace is inevitable, my miſery complete."

The anguiſh of my mind cannot be delineated by the power of words. I gazed around me, and every thing preſented to my view the laſt night's deeply-concerted plan of elopement. On a chair lay Lady Denmore's evening-dreſs, which ſhe had changed to one more convenient for travelling; her turban and feathers were thrown upon the ſofa. Lord Denmore's picture met my eyes, when I glanced over the table; it had, till that hour, been the ornament of Lady Denmore's boſom. I fixed my eyes on it, and, burſting into tears, began to fancy that the features frowned reproach for my unguarded conduct. Powerfully impreſſed with my ſituation,

and anticipating the conſequences that muſt follow, I was ſcarcely in my ſenſes. I ſtole out of the room, and was aſcending the ſtairs, when I met my guardian in his powdering-coat and ſlippers. "Where is Lady Denmore?" ſaid he haſtily: "the clock has ſtruck ſix! why is ſhe not in her chamber?" I trembled, and leaning againſt the wall, nearly overcome by the influence of ſurpriſe and terror, faintly replied, "She is gone, my Lord, but whither I know not."

He made no anſwer, but darted down the ſtaircaſe towards the ſupper-room. I now recollected that I had left the miſchievous note upon the carpet. My fears augmented, and my anguiſh was complete. I haſtened to my chamber, trembling and diſtracted. Preſently my guardian entered Lady Denmore's dreſſing-room. The bell was rung with violence. I heard him order his chaiſe,

with

with poſt-horſes, immediately. My heart palpitated as though it would leap from my boſom; and I awaited my fate like an unpardonable culprit.

It now ſeemed as though I was created to be the victim of untoward events. Mr. Treville appeared to be my evil genius; yet amidſt all my chagrin, I hoped that my guardian's eyes would be opened to, and his ſenſes convinced of the baſe hypocriſy which had ſo long deceived him. Even the perplexing dilemma in which the elopement had involved me, and to which undeſignedly I had been an acceſſary, preſented a faint gleam of conſolation, when I reflected, that Mr. Treville's perſecutions would terminate by the unexpected climax of Lady Denmore's folly. I alſo naturally concluded, that nothing leſs than a divorce would take place between her and my guardian; and that an event, the moſt important to my hopes, was

now within the pale of probability. This may be deemed an unwarrantable and ſelfiſh anticipation; but remember, Frances, I am the vaſſal of the ſenſes, not the pupil of reflection; I am the ſlave of a rooted, probably a fatal paſſion; not the calmly thinking being, who can weigh the affections of the heart againſt the proprieties of Reaſon.

Lord Denmore departed. I watched the chaiſe acroſs the Square, and I ſunk into a ſtupor, occaſioned by a kind of mental concuſſion, which had ſtruck and agitated my brain, till it was benumbed, and ſcarcely ſubject to any ſpecies of impreſſion. In this ſtate of temporary idiotiſm I remained, till the Ducheſs entered my chamber. Lord Denmore had not informed her of my involuntary indiſcretion; and I inſtantly perceived by her countenance, that ſhe felt no reſentment againſt me. As ſhe approached me, I took her hand, and,

burſting

burſting into tears, ſtood ſelf-accuſed before her.

Her features were unmoved; a dignified compoſure marked their expreſſion; ſhe never before appeared ſo nobly, ſo exaltedly ſerene. The pride of conſcious rectitude, and the ſtrength of maternal indignation, ſuſtained her ſpirit. She had tenderly loved her miſguided daughter; ſhe had been painfully diſappointed in her hopes; and as the ſting of ingratitude from a child incurably wounds the boſom of a parent, ſhe was deciſive in her reſentment.

I felt ſo acutely for her ſituation, that I almoſt forgot the predicament in which I had unguardedly involved myſelf. The ſublime fortitude of her mind made me ſhrink at my own inſignificance, while I lamented, that a being ſo ſuperiorly organized ſhould have been the ſlave of ambition, the promoter of her offspring's diſhonour. I ſighed while

the reflection ſtole over my mind; it was the deep and heavy ſigh of a labouring heart. The Ducheſs remarked it.

"Spare your regret, my love," ſaid ſhe: "the vicious do not deſerve ſuch ſympathy; pity ſhould be reſerved for the misfortunes of innocence; and ſighs from ſuch a heart as yours would ſoothe even the affliction of the hopeleſs. From this hour my raſh child muſt be an alien to my boſom; this boſom, which loved her but too tenderly—"

She heſitated to ſuppreſs her feelings, and after a pauſe of ſome minutes proceeded:

"Her conduct has diſgraced the education ſhe received, and diſhonoured the rank ſhe held in ſociety. Had ſhe been born leſs noble, ſhe might have been more happy. We muſt meet no more;" ſhe ſighed, and then faintly added,—"in this world."

Her

Her magnanimity aſtoniſhed me, while it excited my admiration. The grace of reaſon, the impreſſive voice of virtuous indignation, arouſed me from the bewildering reverie in which ſhe found me; and I ſeemed to awake as from a dream. The Ducheſs now, with a compoſed tone and manner, inquired why I was in my evening-dreſs?

"You appear as though you had not ſlept ſince I laſt ſaw you. I expected to find you prepared for our journey," ſaid ſhe, viewing me with evident amazement.

"I have not been in bed ſince I parted from your Grace," anſwered I, while I felt my colour change.

"That was ill-judged, my love," ſaid ſhe. "You have vexations enough to fatigue your ſpirits, without a diminution of reſt. I thought that I heard ſome perſon aſcend the ſtairs ſoon after day-break. Was it you, Gertrude?"

Not daring to deceive her, I anſwered, "Yes."

"Would to Heaven! your preſence had prevented the departure of Lady Denmore," added the Ducheſs.

"Would to God it had!" ſaid I; "but I was created to be the victim of vexatious circumſtances. Had I ſuſpected Lady Denmore's intentions, I would have endeavoured to counteract them."

"Alas, Gertrude!" interrupted the Ducheſs, "all your ſkill could not develope motives ſo refined by hypocriſy; but we will drop the ſubject; your ſpirits are exhauſted: I have plainly perceived of late, that the ſeparation from your guardian produced an inquietude that was painful. The diſcontented mind of Lady Denmore has allowed you but a ſmall portion of tranquillity; ſhe will now ceaſe to perſecute you; and I truſt that, aided by your own good ſenſe,

ſenſe, and your guardian's philanthropy, you will be happy." I ſhook my head, but ſpoke not.

"You muſt exert your reſolution," continued the Ducheſs: "that deſpondency is criminal, which ſinks the heart below humanity. I have cauſe to grieve, Heaven knows! But my pride is equal to my ſorrow. Change your dreſs, and we will immediately ſet out for the Caſtle."

"Lord Denmore is there," cried I trembling.

"And we will endeavour to conſole him," ſaid the Ducheſs. "I have often found that, in ſoothing the ſorrows of another, I have forgot my own. A few days of ſtill ſecluſion will ſuit the temper of my mind; ſoften its reſentments into a calm diſdain, and harmonize its feelings. Grief will ſubſide, when it feels the force of inſult; for reſentment is the beſt antidote for the poiſon of

ingratitude; and that heart only diſgraces its own feelings, which can throb with regret at the triumphs of a villain. Mr. Treville is too deſpicable an object to inſpire any ſenſation but contempt." As ſhe concluded theſe words, ſhe quitted the room, leaving me, if poſſible, more perplexed than ever. I dreaded to meet my guardian, ſo prejudiced as he was againſt me; and yet I did not dare refuſe to accompany the Ducheſs, without aſſigning ſome excuſe that might at leaſt ſeem plauſible.

I ſoon changed my outward appearance; but all within my boſom was unalterably mournful: for the ſtill reaſoner, Conſcience, told me, I had ſtepped ſo far on the path of indiſcretion, and had been ſo imprudently venturous in the arrangement of Mr. Treville's deeply-concerted plan, that I ſhould ſcarcely be able, by all the ſophiſtry of argument, or all the eloquence of truth,

to

to exonerate my conduct, even to the reaſoning mind of the injured Lord Denmore.

The obſtinate reſiſtance which I had made to Mr. Treville's protection, and the ſudden change in Lady Denmore's behaviour towards me, would ſerve to corroborate my guilt, and to prove that there was a ſecret underſtanding between us. It would be in vain for me to declare, that I knew not the contents of the paper which I had conveyed from Mr. Treville to Lady Denmore; that I ſuſpected not the event which they had preconcerted; that the ſtupor of my ſenſes afforded them time to execute their plan of elopement; that I did not awake till it was too late to intercept their flight; or that I felt the moſt extreme ſorrow for the impropriety of their conduct. I expected that my guardian would queſtion me minutely on the ſubject; and I could not, without violating

violating truth, deny, that I had been the cauſe of all that had happened; that while I was pleading for Lady Denmore's repoſe, I was undermining her honour; or that, by flattering the vanity of a libertine, I alſo promoted a new ſcene of triumph. Even if I had the effrontery to deny the part I had acted, I had no chance of eſcaping cenſure; for Mr. Treville's note of acknowledgment would plead againſt the extenuation of my conduct, and preſent conviction too ſtrong for any plea of mine to counteract it.

In leſs than an hour the Ducheſs's landau was at the door, and I was ſummoned to attend her: ſhe was already in the carriage. I ſilently took my place, and was followed by Mrs. Sewell, whoſe countenance was expreſſively melancholy.

During the firſt ten miles ſcarcely a word was ſpoken; and I was rather ſatisfied than otherwiſe, by a taciturnity which

which gave me time to collect my thoughts, and to methodize my plan of defence, before I met the ſoul-queſtioning eyes of Lord Denmore. Twice Mr. Treville had involved me in dilemmas, and twice exculpated his conduct by the ſubtlety of his nature: for however ardently we may adore the omnipotence of Truth; however beneath the ſhield of candour the ingenuous boſom may hope to repel the arrows of detraction; artifice will circumvent the pureſt motives; and the ſpeciouſneſs of accompliſhed fraud perpetually defeat the ſimplicity of nature.

We ſtopped to dine on the road, and my curioſity was eager to know (for affection can render even trifles important) whether my guardian had paſſed that way ſince the morning. I was ſoon informed that he had; but that he changed horſes, without quitting his carriage. As we proceeded towards the Caſtle,

Caſtle, every mile ſeemed lengthened beyond its uſual limits. I felt as though I was approaching a tribunal, where juſtice would be rigidly and ſternly exerciſed. I expected to meet my inexorable judge in my offended guardian; my reproof, from the voice which it had hitherto been felicity to hear; and my baniſhment, from that boſom, where I had hoped to enjoy the moſt unbounded protection.

At length the carriage came within ſight of the Caſtle; I looked eagerly for the brown turrets and the lofty battlements; my ſoul was in my eyes; my heart throbbed painfully its tumultuous feelings; and my quivering lips faintly articulated, "How, how ſhall I meet Lord Denmore?"

"With the compoſure of innocence," ſaid the Ducheſs. "What have you to fear, my love? My Lord Denmore is injured and inſulted, but not by you."

"Ah,

"Ah, madam!" anſwered I ſighing: "how kindly do you ſeek to reconcile me to myſelf. How little do you know the extent of my indiſcretion!" The Ducheſs gazed earneſtly on me while I ſpoke, and after an evident though ſhort rumination, inquired, "Do you love Lord Denmore? A new light breaks in upon my mind: I truſt, I hope that you are innocent."

I ſhuddered.

"Heavens, child!" exclaimed the Ducheſs: "have I been deceived? Has Lord Denmore dared to contaminate your virtue? Were my daughter's ſuſpicions founded on reaſon? Speak, Gertrude; do not ſuffer me to be diſgraced by ſanctioning an imprudent, a diſhonorable action; do not expoſe me to the contempt, the ridicule of the world, by making me convenient to your folly." We now ſtopped at the park lodge: while the gate was opening

ing, the Ducheſs continued: "It is not yet too late; I can return to London. Lord Denmore is the maſter of his actions; you are old enough, and wiſe enough to guard your own honour."

"My honour is unſullied!" ſaid I, reddening to ſcarlet.

"Then why betray ſuch conſcious reprehenſion? why fear to meet your guardian; to incur my reproaches?"

"Are there not degrees of criminality, and is not the abettor of a crime, equally culpable with the projector?" ſaid I. We now ſtopped at the Caſtle, and the converſation was interrupted; my heart throbbed, and my whole frame trembled convulſively.

On inquiring, we found that Lord Denmore had ſecluded himſelf in his library, with ſtrict commands that he ſhould on no account whatever be diſturbed during the evening. It was only ſix o'clock

o'clock when we deſcended from the carriage; it is now ten; the Ducheſs has been ſleeping, and I have employed nearly the laſt four hours in unravelling the web of deſtiny, which appears every moment more and more intricate. Alas, Frances! however by perſeverance the thread of life may be diſentangled, I begin to fear that the clue will never lead me to repoſe; and that while I endeavour to keep it even, the Fates conſpire to torture and miſlead me.

Adieu. To-morrow I will reſume my pen, if I am able.

LETTER XLII.

The Same to the Same.

October 1, 1796.

READ the incloſed letter, and then judge if I betray a debaſing weakneſs, while I confeſs that my fortitude is exhauſted; it was delivered to me only an hour ago, before I quitted my bed, where I had paſſed a night of reſtleſſneſs. I cannot expatiate on the ſeverity of my fortune; I can only lament that I have deſerved to ſuffer.

(The Letter incloſed.)

Lord DENMORE *to Miſs* St. LEGER.

"THE anguiſh of the heart defeats the preciſion of method, and ill accords with

with the graces of phraſeology. Gertrude, I know not which moſt to condemn, your profligacy or your ingratitude. I can ſcarcely decide which excites the moſt painful conſternation, the art with which you conſpired againſt my repoſe, or the courage with which you aided in the ruin of my honour.

"You have for ever forfeited all claims to confidence: you have broken the ſacred bonds of friendſhip and eſteem; tarniſhed the purity of truth; and ſtung the credulous boſom that foſtered and adored you! The proofs are in my poſſeſſion: the letter which even in my preſence a villain wrote and confided to your care; and the haſty note which was left in the apartment, where Lady Denmore abjured the ſacred name of wife; while you aided in accompliſhing her diſgrace, with the effrontery of a practiſed pander.

"My ſoul ſhudders at your depravity. Such a refinement of vice would aſtoniſh, even in the mind of experienced age; how infernal does it appear in the boſom of youth, while it impreſſes the ſtamp of ſhame on the fair face of beauty.

"Gertrude! we muſt ſeparate for ever. I ſhall purſue my journey to Italy alone. I have arreſted my intentions reſpecting Mr. Treville's preferment, and the parſonage-houſe will be ready to receive you. The preſent poſſeſſor is married; his wife is worthy and diſcreet; with her you may reſide; in their ſociety you may learn to repent your folly, and to reform your heart. Your future comforts will depend on your contrition.

"I ſhall henceforth only remember you with regret; the depravity of your conduct has alienated you from my boſom;

boſom; you have forfeited my eſteem, but are ſtill entitled to my pity.

"The ſum for which I gave you credit at my banker's ſhall be ſtill yours, by quarterly payments of twenty-five pounds. The worthy woman, to whoſe care I now conſign you, will ſee that you are provided with a wardrobe annually ſuch as becomes a perſon of reſpectable birth and poliſhed education. Your pleaſures ſhall be increaſed as your mind becomes purified; your future fate will depend on your own conduct; and I truſt that your progreſs through the world will be leſs diſgraceful than your entrance into its ſociety.

"Since you have proved yourſelf ſo ingenious in the arcanum of intrigue, I am now ſceptical as to the former accuſations which were alleged againſt you. The ſtory of Mrs. Blonzely's *déjeûné*, and of your aſſignation with Sir Hector Upas at Brighthelmſtone, now aſſume the

the ſombre caſt of more than probability. My eyes are opened to your folly; my ſoul ſhudders at your licentiouſneſs. The ſeeming meekneſs, the bluſhing modeſty of your demeanour, augment the enormity of your crime; and while they render you the moſt bewitching of aſſociates, they alſo mark you as the moſt cold-hearted, the moſt barbarous of deceivers.

"Attempt not to palliate your fault; it will admit of no extenuation. Examine and reform your heart; root from its contaminated core the poiſon of duplicity; make it endure a penance ſtern and unceaſing. Forget me, as your guardian and your friend, and only remember me as the victim of your ingratitude.

"DENMORE."

This letter ſeemed to palſy my fortitude, and, like a death-blow, to annihilate

hilate every hope of happineſs. Loſt to Lord Denmore's eſteem, whither could I turn for protection? convicted of the groſſeſt folly, (to give my conduct the mildeſt appellation,) who would admit me into their confidence? The nature of my fault rendered me, to outward appearance, a domeſtic ſerpent; the wiſe would naturally ſuſpect, and the prudent condemn me. My ſituation was terrible.

I roſe from my bed, and haſtily dreſſing myſelf, ſent a verbal meſſage, for I was too ſtrongly agitated to write at that moment, requeſting an interview with Lord Denmore. The anſwer returned was ſternly repulſive. "She knows my determination, and ſhe ought to know her own unworthineſs." The ſervant trembled as ſhe repeated the words; and my indignation began to fortify my ſenſibility.

I deſcended to the library, and entered without any previous introduction. My diſtreſs became deſperate; my reſentment ſtrong. I had erred, erred egregiouſly; but the fault was not premeditated: I did not know its magnitude, at the moment of my committing it: it was a deluſion of the ſenſes, wholly diſtinct, and far removed from a depravity of the mind. But appearances were againſt me; and prejudice is an inexorable, as well as a partial judge. The only hope that animated my boſom originated in the conſciouſneſs that I was once beloved by Lord Denmore; that, had not my evil genius prevailed in the perſon of Mr. Treville, his protection would have been ſecure, his regard undiminiſhed. Adoring my ſtern preceptor, and knowing no happineſs when ſeparated from him, I could not tamely yield to his diſpleaſure, or let go

that hold upon his mind, which conſtituted all my earthly felicity, without one effort to ſtrengthen or retain it. Frances, the woman who really loves, ſees in this vaſt, this extenſive univerſe, no other object but that which faſcinates her affections. It is that one, that omnipotent maſter of the heart, who gives exiſtence to delight, and delight to exiſtence. Every other mortal fails to intereſt; and every purſuit which does not, in the revolving track of time, make that one its central joy, not only fatigues, but agonizes the ſenſes.

I often endeavour to divert my mind by books. I read whole pages, without even knowing the ſubject of my ſtudy. I then fly to muſic; every tone, for I can ſelect no compoſition that is not mournful, vibrates on my heart, and depreſſes me to ſadneſs. I endeavour with my pencil to delineate the beauties of Nature; but the tear of regret

renders every line indiſtinct, every colour dim, and every ſcene vapidly unintereſting. The image of Lord Denmore is for ever preſent to my imagination; and, dazzled by its pre-eminence, I can ſee no other.

As ſoon as I entered the room, Lord Denmore ſtarted from his ſeat, and with a faultering voice, ſternly commanded me to be gone. His countenance was terrifically ſevere, his eyes wild and haggard, his mien diſordered, and his words uttered with a tone ſo tremulous, that I inſtantly repented having broken in upon his ſecluſion. Yet, without the power to withdraw from his preſence, I ſtood trembling before him; till he again addreſſed me, by aſking how I "dared inſult his ſorrow, by attempting to juſtify that which was unpardonable."

"You miſtake my motive; indeed, my Lord, you miſtake it," ſaid I; "this is no moment for my juſtification; your mind

mind is too evidently warped by prejudice to liſten impartially; and I am too deeply penetrated by your diſtreſs, to ſpeak with that eloquence which might acquit me. Yet let me demand a patient hearing; let me plead the open ingenuouſneſs of an inexperienced heart. If for a moment I believed in Mr. Treville's honour, to whom, my Lord, is he indebted for my miſtaken confidence? Who has uniformly reprobated my abhorrence of his mind and manners, my ſcepticiſm of his ſincerity, my fears of his duplicity? Who has taught me to rely on the virtues, to credit the veracity, to truſt my fame and happineſs to this maſter of diſſimulation? Whom, but yourſelf? And if men of honour will diſgrace their names by countenancing wretches who are the poiſons of ſociety; if vice and profligacy are permitted to rear their brows, triumphant, in defiance of truth, juſtice, and huma-

nity, where are the injured and the defenceleſs to hope for retribution?"

Lord Denmore was confuſed; conviction ſtruck upon his heart, and palſied the powers of articulation. I continued:

"Whatever I have hitherto aſſerted reſpecting Mr. Treville, has been placed to the account of prejudice or pique. I have borne repeated inſults; I have witneſſed treachery that made me ſhudder with abhorrence. I have ſeen him accept favours from thoſe whom he had either ridiculed or ſlandered; I have known him traduce even his warmeſt friends; ſtigmatize his moſt liberal patrons; fawn over and flatter thoſe whom he has deſpiſed; and ſtoop to court, with ſervile adulation, thoſe whom he has meditated to betray. Baſe and ungrateful, vicious yet daring, arrogant yet mean, and prodigal though avaricious, he has aſſumed a conſequence by boldneſs,

neſs, and at the ſame time trampled upon every thing like honour or humanity. Yet, while ſanctioned by your eſteem, it was hereſy to queſtion his veracity, and folly to oppoſe his cunning. The world conſidered him as favoured with the patronage of virtue, and the voice of reprehenſion was too feeble to approach him."

Lord Denmore's agitation was viſible. "I was deceived," replied he; "I thought Mr. Treville the moſt ſincere and honourable of friends: but if the ſtories I have heard be true, you knew he was a villain: therefore you are culpable beyond all hope of pardon." I was ſilenced by this juſt diſcrimination. Lord Denmore roſe to quit the room. I reflected, that if I permitted this propitious moment to eſcape, I never ſhould have another opportunity to plead my cauſe. I caught his hand; I held it with all the ſtrength which the

perturbation of my mind allowed me: he ſeemed to loſe the faculty of reſiſtance for a few moments, till by an effort in which the mental ſeemed to aid the corporeal powers, he forced me to let go my hold, and left me.

I now inquired after the Ducheſs of Aldborough; and, to my inexpreſſible chagrin, I was informed, that before I was awake, ſhe had quitted the Caſtle. The houſekeeper, who communicated this painful intelligence, added, that the excellent woman wept bitterly; and, on ſtepping into her carriage, conjured Lord Denmore to inveſtigate without prejudice, and to judge leniently. "Poor Gertrude! I pity her ſincerely," ſaid the Ducheſs: "but the laws of decorum will not permit me to ſee her, while ſhe bears the ſtigma which is now attached to her conduct. Happy, moſt happy ſhall I be, to know that ſhe is cleared from the imputation."

While

While Mrs. Walters was giving me this conſoling intelligence, which beſpoke rather an acquieſcence with the cuſtoms of the world, and a dread of its cenſure, than any ſevere opinion of my conduct, a meſſage was delivered to me, from Lord Denmore, briefly commanding me inſtantly to depart, on pain of his wholly and eternally withdrawing his protection.

I heard the mandate with a calmneſs of ſoul which evinced its innocence. No ſigh eſcaped my boſom; no tear betrayed the weakneſs of regret. I felt conſcious of an unmerited inſult; and my pride inſtantly towered above my ſorrow. After a pauſe of ſeveral minutes, during which I compoſed the riſing tumults of my boſom, I replied:

"Tell Lord Denmore that I obey him, merely to await with patience for that hour which ſhall acquit me of every

imputation, and exonerate him from every bond of friendſhip: for I will periſh, when once my conduct is fairly and impartially inveſtigated, rather than augment the obligations which I owe to one, who is capable of ſuſpecting either my honour or my gratitude."

"I dare not deliver ſuch a meſſage," cried Mrs. Walters.

"And yet you had courage to convey that which Lord Denmore uttered," ſaid I: "but I am a dependent; he is your maſter. The taſk of aſſerting the innocence of an unprotected being againſt the imputation of guilt from ſo powerful an accuſer, is the effort of a noble and exalted mind. I was miſtaken."

Piqued by my ſevere remark, Mrs. Walters promiſed to repeat my words boldly in the preſence of Lord Denmore. Then, with tears in her eyes, ſhe

ſhe added, "And muſt you go, Miſs Gertrude? indeed, you will leave many ſorrowful hearts at the Caſtle."

I ſilently acknowledged her kindneſs, which came moſt ſeaſonably to ſooth my boſom. I took her hand and preſſed it, but I had not words to thank her.

"My Lord is very angry," ſaid ſhe: "and I adviſe you not to provoke him farther. I will bring your clothes and trunks to-morrow; you know the way to the parſonage on the hill!"

"I do not indeed," ſaid I. "But I will find it." I now embraced her and bade her farewell.

"Are you afraid to go alone?" inquired Mrs. Walters.

"What have I to fear? All ſcenes to me are mournful," ſaid I: "and death in its moſt dreadful ſhape, would not at this moment alarm me."

"Do not talk profanely, my dear child!" interrupted the old ſervant:

" but compoſe your ſpirits, and put your truſt in God!"

" I have no other friend!" ſaid I, burſting into tears.

" And he is one that will laſt for ever!" added Mrs. Walters. I now aſcended to my chamber; put on my hat, and taking a ſmall bundle of linen with me, was proceeding acroſs the park, when my kind friend came running after me, with a little baſket of fruit and ſome conſerves, which ſhe begged me to accept as a token of her good wiſhes. I was too deeply afflicted to ſay much; but my countenance evinced the gratitude of my heart. She felt the tacit confeſſion of her kindneſs, and, with tears in her eyes, hurried back towards the Caſtle.

I traverſed the woods, I croſſed the valley, and at length began to aſcend the path to the parſonage-houſe. My boſom throbbed with a thouſand appre-

henſions,

henſions. I was now to become the inmate of a new home; to be the aſſociate of ſtrangers; a ſecluded culprit doomed to ſuffer penance for the worſt, the moſt abhorred of crimes, *ingratitude.*

Before I approached the threſhold of my deſtined aſylum, I looked round, as if to take a long farewell of every happineſs. The Caſtle and its extenſive domains lay at the foot of the hill, forming a beautiful valley ſkirted with woods, and ſtrikingly romantic. The brown towers gave a ſolemnity to the ſcene, which impreſſed the mind with a melancholy penſiveneſs; I ſighed deeply, and, loſt in contemplation, was gazing intently down the declivity, when I obſerved Lord Denmore's chaiſe winding the road along the park, and proceeding towards London. My eyes looked wiſtfully as the carriage ſeemed by diſtance to diminiſh; and, as ſoon as

it

it was out of ſight, the power of gazing ſeemed no more! Every object firſt appeared to dance before me; then became inveloped in a dim hazineſs, till I threw myſelf upon the ſlanting turf, almoſt inſenſible.

A gentle arm ſoon raiſed me from the ground, and a benignly placid countenance met my eyes, as I looked fearfully around me. I perceived by the habit which the ſtranger wore, that he was my new guardian, while the mildneſs of his voice revived my exhauſted ſpirits, and by ſlow degrees recalled them back to reaſon.

This amiable perſonage, who was only known in the vicinity of the Caſtle by the name of parſon Pew, was almoſt fifty-ſix years of age, gracious in manners, benevolent in mind, and bleſt with a ſuavity of temper ſcarcely to be equalled. He uttered not many ſyllables, but he looked conſolation; I leant upon

upon his arm, with downcaſt eyes, and we proceeded ſlowly towards the porch of the parſonage.

There we were greeted by Mrs. Pew, whoſe modeſt and unaffected demeanour pleaſed, and reanimated my boſom. She was neither young nor handſome; but ſhe was pious, ſimple, and good-natured. We entered the ſmall parlour, where the dinner-table was neatly and invitingly prepared. I ate but little, for my heart was full of ſorrow.

The converſation was cheerful, rational, and ſoothing. Mr. Pew laboured to make me conſider myſelf already at home, and his wife was zealous to ſanction his endeavours; though I felt a glow of jealous inquietude ruſh over my cheek, when ſhe declared that ſhe would "do any thing that was becoming, to oblige my Lord Denmore."

This

This ſimple confeſſion, ſpontaneouſly ſpringing from an open heart, checked my ſelf-love, and told me that I was not welcomed or foſtered on my own account, but in obedience to Lord Denmore's wiſhes. Mr. Pew ſmiled when his wife made the declaration, and added, "any thing that would not diſgrace you." Then turning to me he continued: "but in this inſtance the obligation is conferred on us." I bowed my head, and began to feel more eaſy.

In the evening a ſervant brought my trunks and clothes, with a quantity of books, to compoſe a little library. I received them thankfully; and, Mrs. Pew having appropriated a ſmall room to my uſe, beſides that in which I was to ſleep, I began to add thoſe ſources of information and amuſement to the already ſimply neat and convenient decorations. The apartment was furniſhed

with

with plain white cotton; the paper grey; a carpet covered the floor, and ſeveral ſhelves were hung in receſſes on both ſides the chimney, which was gaily dreſſed with china jars, filled with flowers, freſh gathered againſt my arrival. The window, which was a caſement, was ſhadowed with the thatch of the low roof, and enriched with honeyſuckles: but its aſpect was directly on the church-yard, nearly overlooking the monument of the Denmore family.

The contraſt which this apartment preſented, when compared with the ancient and ſpacious chambers of the Caſtle, (the rich damaſk hangings, the coſtly tapeſtry, and the ſolemn grandeur of the architecture,) was ſingularly ſtriking. Yet my mind was rather ſoothed than depreſſed by the change. I felt a kind of placid melancholy, a penſiveneſs that was by no means unpleaſant.

The

The tranſition from gay and buſy ſcenes, from the ſplendors of exalted life, to the ſimple and contracted ſphere of unaſſuming quiet, could not be more ſtrikingly marked than in the preſent inſtance; and the change of inanimate objects was not more decided, than the contraſt of temper and purſuits in my old and new aſſociates.

I diſcovered during the converſation at dinner, that Mr. Pew is not in actual poſſeſſion of the living of Denmore; but merely reſident here at pleaſure, the late incumbent being dead ſix months, and Lord Denmore yet undetermined on whom to beſtow the benefice. Mr. Pew is the curate of a ſmall village five miles off, and the parſonage being out of repair, ſo as to render it untenantable, he obtained permiſſion to reſide where I now find him, till a new incumbent ſhall be appointed.

Mrs.

Mrs. Pew bears the character of an excellent woman and a good neighbour. Her benevolence is univerſally acknowledged, and her unaffected piety worthy of imitation. How far Mr. Treville would have proved a deſirable ſucceſſor, I leave you to judge; and when I reflect, that this modeſt unaſſuming pair would have been obliged to relinquiſh their ſituation for ſuch a ſubſtitute, I almoſt rejoice in the diſgrace which has deprived him of Lord Denmore's patronage.

Adieu. Here I ſhall have leiſure to reflect, and to communicate the reſult of my cogitations. In this calm and rational retreat, the mind will recover its harmony, and the heart expand to receive a purer, finer ſenſation, than it has of late been taught to experience. I already feel the effect of my tranquil ſeclusion; and you will perceive that ſince I began my letter, the language of

my

my pen has leſs of inquietude and more of reaſon than was exemplified in thoſe which I have lately written. Congratulate me on the change, and believe me ever your friend.

LETTER XLIII.

The Same to the Same.

Denmore Parſonage, Oct. 8, 1796.

I FIND by letters which Mr. Pew received yeſterday from Lord Denmore, dated at Cuxhaven, that he is now on his journey towards Italy. He has not honoured me with a line of remembrance, though he ſtrongly recommended me to the care and attention of my new guardian.

Six days have paſſed in a ſerenity of mind which I have not enjoyed ſince I quitted

I quitted Ireland. The ſeverity of Lord Denmore's reſentment has called forth that proud and conſcious energy which will ſuſtain my fortitude till the hour of my acquittal ſhall arrive. I will then act deciſively. I will employ my mental faculties to procure that independence, without which I am now convinced there can be no real happineſs. The affection which I owe to Lord Denmore can never be diminiſhed; but I muſt alſo do juſtice to myſelf. I have been to blame; but his reſentment has in its extremes kept pace with my indiſcretion. I have been the dupe of my credulity; he has been the ſlave of prejudice; while the ſternly faſtidious paſſions of his mind have maſtered its humanity. I can love ardently, but I can alſo reſent with firmneſs. This is not the acrimonious menace of a vindictive ſpirit, but the juſt indignation of a ſen-

a ſenſitive mind wounded deeply, and I fear incurably.

I frequently wander about the woods round Denmore Caſtle. I ſit whole hours in the receſs near which I was reſcued from deſtruction by him whom I then called guardian, but who has now reſigned that intereſting title. The ſolitude of the ſcenery daily meliorates the acute ſenſe of regret; I am become more penſive, but leſs agitated. The fervour of my mind diminiſhes, as its reſiſting faculties gain ſtrength by meditation. I look back upon my ſhort intercourſe with the buſy world, and I ſhudder; for the folly and duplicity of mankind diſguſt the heart, and I begin to conſider ſociety as the bane of ſentiment, the poiſon of felicity. Even the acrimony of a miſanthropic ſpirit is leſs pernicious than the honeyed miſchief of deceit extracted from the ſelfiſh mind,

mind, and dreſſed in the fair ſemblance of friendſhip or affection. I have ſeen villains ſanctioned by high patronage, even in the avowal of crimes, for which the lower orders of ſociety would be eternally diſhonoured. I have beheld men, without ſentiment, feeling, rectitude, or character, upheld in infamy; countenanced by the exalted, and even by the virtuous; their enormities concealed beneath the brazen maſk of arrogance, and their violations of honour excuſed as the ebullitions of a glowing fancy; while their unblushing licentiouſneſs is conſidered as the warmth of paſſion, and their ingratitude placed to the account of fortune's unkindneſs. Yet ſuch men will watch, like ravenous wolves, for prey; they will cajole the ſimple, deceive the innocent, defraud the credulous, and inſult the unprotected; they will borrow from the wealthy, cheat the believing, ruin a friend, or calumniate

calumniate a patron; aſſociate with thoſe whom they deſpiſe and ridicule; court, and even flatter, the exalted fool who admits him to his confidence; and, at the ſame moment, debauch his wife, or intrigue with his miſtreſs. In his political character he is equally ſincere, and no leſs ſucceſsful. He will be, for a time, the moſt ſervile adulator, the moſt ſycophantic courtier; till his hopes are diſappointed, and his merit juſtly appreciated. He *then* becomes a zealous partiſan; the fawning, ſervile lacquey of his patron: he will ſay and unſay with the moſt convenient facility; profeſs an independent mind, and at the ſame moment avow himſelf the tool of party. Thus viewing both ſides the road to preferment, and by weighing popular clamour in the ſcale againſt private worth, he aſſumes a conſequence which he is not entitled to, either by birth or abilities; and, with the aid of unabaſhed

unabaſhed effrontery, takes precedence of truth, talents, and integrity! Such a man is the profligate, unprincipled, mean, inſidious, ſelf-intereſted, ungrateful Treville!—Adieu! adieu!

LETTER XLIV.

The Same to the Same.

Denmore Parſonage, Nov. 22, 1796.

I HAVE paſſed ſix weeks in this peaceful ſolitude; and I have experienced every hour increaſing kindneſs from my new companions. How different are the manners of this amiable pair, from thoſe which, in the great world, I was deſtined to witneſs! Here, ſimplicity and virtue grace the humble paths of life, attended by benevolence, and ſuſ-

tained by unaffected piety. There, all was diſſimulation, vice, and folly; envy the predominating paſſion of the mind, and ſlander the promoter of every inquietude. I have relinquiſhed ſuch ſcenes with a degree of ſatisfaction ſcarcely deſcribable; and in the ſecluſion of this romantic ſpot I truſt that all my griefs will be forgotten.

Lord Denmore's ſeverity has wounded my pride; but it has taken from my heart a load which preſſed heavily upon it. Conſcious of never having deſerved ſuch unkindneſs, the reſentment of inſulted affection will not fail to ſooth its inquietudes. I will endeavour to ſubdue the tenderneſs of my attachment; and I will learn to ſcorn that imputation which malevolence has fixed upon me. A grovelling and obſequious ſpirit would but diſgrace the friendſhip with which Lord Denmore once honoured me:

and

and though I am fallen in his eſteem, I will prove that I am ſtill above his pity.

I find, by intelligence received at the Caſtle, that my guardian, for ſuch I ſtill conſider him, is ſuing for a divorce; and that his return to England may be expected ſooner than was imagined at the period of his departure. This reſtleſſneſs of mind ſtrongly evinces the ſenſibility of his heart; and though his affection for Lady Denmore may not be wholly obliterated, I think that his pride will ſhortly teach him to forget her. How apt are we to judge of others, without even daring to ſcrutinize our own hearts!

I have alſo been informed that Sir Hector has eloped with Miſs Cecil; and that his charming wife is now proceeding, legally, to obtain that releaſe which will ſnatch her from the control of her illiterate tyrant. Mr. and Mrs. Pew

purpoſe viſiting London for a few days; and they have earneſtly requeſted that I will accompany them. I have hitherto refuſed to accept the invitation: but, ſuch is their kindneſs towards me, that if they perſevere in their ſolicitations, I fear I ſhall not have reſolution to deny them.

You ſhall hear from me again, as ſoon as I have decided. Till then, farewell.

LETTER XLV.

The Same to the Same.

London, Dec. 1, 1796.

LAST night we arrived in the metropolis, where Mr. Pew, his wife, and myſelf, have taken up our abode for ten days or a fortnight. We are on a viſit to Mrs. Pew's ſiſter, who is married

to

to a ſober citizen, eſtabliſhed as a wholeſale linen-draper in Cheapſide.

I have now an opportunity of examining a new ſpecies of character; for the minds and purſuits of the inhabitants of St. James's and St. Paul's are as oppoſite as their exterior: and though the eye may dwell with admiration on the gay and gaudy ſcenes of faſhionable ſplendor, the heart muſt pay its tribute of applauſe to the private integrity of thoſe who are, in the ancient acceptation of the name, the citizens of England.

It is aſtoniſhing how much better this reſpectable claſs of perſons underſtand the comforts of life, than the moſt luxurious of our nobility. The houſe of an opulent citizen is the abode of eaſe, blended with the diſcretion of induſtry; he toils for the bleſſings of proſperity; and he enjoys them, without the ſatiety of profuſion. Every hour has its occu-

pation; and the liſtleſs fever of *ennui* is as great a phenomenon in the regions of traffic, as the repoſe of a tranquil mind in the buſy turmoil of diſſipation.

The variety of amuſements already named afford but little pleaſure and ſtill leſs impatience. I however promiſed Mr. and Mrs. Pew that I would accompany them this evening to Drury-lane Theatre, to ſee the Britiſh Thalia, Mrs. Jordan, in Mrs. Inchbald's charming play, "The Child of Nature." We are ſo unfaſhionably curious, that we purpoſe being there even before the curtain riſes; and we hope that, during the evening, we ſhall be ſo impolitely attentive to the mimic ſcene, as neither to yawn with fatigue, nor to doſe with the languor of refinement.

I will give you an account of our entertainment by the poſt to-morrow.

LETTER XLVI.

The Same to the Same.

London, Dec. 2, 1796.

IMMEDIATELY after dinner we ſet out in a hackney-coach for the Theatre, where in a few minutes we were commodiouſly ſeated in the front of the pit, a few benches from the orcheſtra. The houſe was crowded in every part; the boxes filled with beauty and faſhion; the ſcenery appropriate, and the performance exquiſite. The character which Mrs. Jordan repreſented particularly intereſted my feelings. I ſmiled and wept involuntarily, as ſhe diſplayed her reſiſtleſs and magical influence over the ſenſes and the heart.

The play being over, and the farce about to begin, I obſerved a party in

the ſtage-box laughing exceſſively: the extravagance of their vivacity faſcinated the attention of the whole pit; and you will judge of my aſtoniſhment, or rather confuſion, when I found that my companions and myſelf excited their mirth, and provoked their illiberal conduct.

In the front row ſat Lady Melcomb, who, with a military *petit maitre*, and a half-naked dowager of faſhion, pointed me out not only to her own crowded box, but to the whole Theatre. I will allow that our group diſplayed ſomething of the groteſque, which might authorize a moderate degree of pleaſantry: but, in order that you may form your own opinion on the ſubject, I will deſcribe the parties.

The good divine, my benevolent and guileleſs protector, is about five feet high, extremely ſlender, ill formed, and ungraceful. His countenance, (which is lean and ſallow, with a noſe diſproportionably

portionably prominent, and a chin lengthened even to caricature,) was adorned with a pair of green ſpectacles, and ſurrounded with a full-powdered wig, of moſt enormous dimenſions. Mrs. Pew, who is nearly ſix feet high, and who has a face which in colour might rival the roſe of Jericho, wore a hat profuſely decorated with yellow ribbands, a crimſon ſatin gown, and a pair of lace ruffles widely ſpread upon her hips, giving her the appearance of a turkey-cock, with extended wings, preparing for a battle.

By her ſide ſat her brother-in-law Mr. Paiſley, whoſe exceſſive corpulency was little diminiſhed in ludicrous effect by a light lilac coat and ſtriped coquelicot ſatin waiſtcoat, which he took care to diſplay, by facing every ſide of the houſe alternately. Poor Mrs. Paiſley, whoſe complexion is ſingularly wan, and whoſe eye-brows are

decidedly flaxen, wore a jet black wig, falling in vandyke curls upon her neck and forehead; a roſe-coloured calico robe, without any waiſt; and a ſmall ſtraw hat with a ſcarlet feather of enormous length, nodding and waving by every movement of her perſon. My own dreſs was a riding-habit of mixed cloth, and a white beaver hat, without any trimming. I choſe it more for convenience than propriety, and more for warmth than elegance.

During the firſt act and the ſecond ſcene of the farce, Mr. Pew fell faſt aſleep. The fatigue of the preceding day's journey, and the vaſt quantity of lights, to which he had been unaccuſtomed, overpowered his ſenſes. At a moment when the houſe was ſtill, and the attention of the audience fixed upon the performers, our ſleeping companion began to ſnore loudly. Some laughed, others vociferated "Silence!" while all

my

my endeavours were exerted, without ſucceſs, to wake him.

After ſhaking and pinching him ſeveral minutes, he opened his eyes, and, taking off his ſpectacles, looked wildly round him. But this effort was of ſhort duration; for again the drowſineſs returned, and again I trembled for its conſequences.

Nearly overpowered by the heat of the Theatre, and the new mortifications which I now began to anticipate, I took off my hat, which preſſing heavily on my forehead, had cauſed me to ſuffer exceſſive pain; while it lay on my lap, and I was abſorbed in attention to the ſcene, Mr. Paiſley, with humour all his own, conceiving that by teazing Mr. Pew he ſhould keep him awake, placed my inch-brimmed beaver on the enormous wig of his ſlumbering kinſman; the effect was like electricity: thoſe who occupied the ſtage-box burſt into

a loud laugh; and thoſe in the pit who did not reliſh this ill-timed pleaſantry, began to hiſs vehemently.

Lady Melcomb was too much delighted by my evident chagrin, not to improve the opportunity for farther merriment, then whiſpered to the warlike Adonis who was her companion, and in an inſtant he vociferated "Encore! encore!"

The ſound ſpread with the ſwiftneſs of a whirlwind. The diſcontented increaſed their groans and hiſſes with augmented clamour. My worthy protector imprudently ſhook his cane at the martial ſprig of nobility, and the ſcene of action became outrageouſly tumultuous.

The confuſion of the hour augmented rapidly. Mrs. Paiſley, overcome with terror, fainted; a lady who ſat next to her, in endeavouring to preſerve her hat and feather, unfortunately removed

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the vandyke treſſes alſo. The ſhouts and yells now become vociferous; the jetty locks were exalted on a cane, and the cauſe of laughter inſtantly became viſible to the whole Theatre.

What was to be done? To have left Mrs. Paiſley in a ſtate of inſenſibility would have been barbarous in the extreme; and it was certain that while our party remained in the pit, there was no chance of quelling the uproar. I now reſolved at all hazards to make my eſcape, and with the aſſiſtance of a young lady, who had ſat behind me during the evening, I at laſt reached the portico; when to my infinite chagrin I found that the night was tempeſtuous, the rain pouring in torrents, and my pocket emptied even to the laſt ſhilling. Wearied, mortified, and perplexed, I had now no remedy but patience; I therefore reſolved to wait in the pit lobby, till the farce was concluded,

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when I hoped once more to join my unfortuuate companions.

Here I was expoſed to a variety of inſults from the profligate of both ſexes. In the confuſion I had loſt my hat, and the deluge of rain which fell, prevented the poſſibility of my walking. I now ventured into the portico, and to my infinite joy obſerved Lady Melcomb, attended by her military *ceciſbeo*, advancing towards her carriage. I darted forward, in hopes that ſo ſituated, ſhe would condeſcend to offer me ſome aid. I preſented myſelf before her; but the diſtraction and terror of my looks excited no compaſſion. She ſmiled contemptuouſly, and turning to her effeminate ſupporter, exclaimed, "Good Heavens! the girl is frantic."

She ſtept into her chariot, and the coachman inſtantly drove on. I could have wept with vexation, and was perſecuted almoſt beyond my patience, when

when I heard the crowd beginning to quit the Theatre. I now hoped once more to meet my companions. I loitered in the lobby; looked and liſtened; but in vain. Nothing met my eyes, bearing the ſmalleſt reſemblance to their features, and my fortitude at length wholly forſook me.

Thus did I remain in a ſtate of ſolicitude ſcarcely ſupportable, nearly half an hour, at the end of which the houſe being entirely empty, the door-keepers informed me that I could remain there no longer. Having no alternative but to walk home, notwithſtanding the diſorder of my dreſs and the badneſs of the weather, I was quitting the portico in Ruſſel-ſtreet, when a hackney-coach ſtopped by the ſide of the pavement, and I heard a female inquire whether ſhe ſhould be of uſe to me. I flew towards the carriage door, and inſtantly recogniſed the civil young lady by whoſe

aſſiſtance

aſſiſtance I had eſcaped from the pit to the lobby. She expreſſed her aſtoniſhment at ſeeing me ſtill alone, and offered to ſet me down at my place of reſidence. I thanked her with eager joy, and in a few moments ſeated myſelf beſide her.

The coachman was now ordered to drive, with all poſſible haſte, to Cheapſide. The young lady was polite and attentive. More than prudently communicative, I told her the whole ſtory of my dilemma; her converſation was modeſt, and her manner ſingularly pleaſing. On our arrival at Mr. Paiſley's door, I entreated her to enter, and to accept ſome refreſhment; I alſo wiſhed, while I informed her who I was without reſerve, that ſhe ſhould receive the acknowledgments of my friends, for the ſervice ſhe had rendered me in a moment of ſuch important neceſſity. She declined the invitation; at the ſame time

acquainting

acquainting me that ſhe was expected at home, having already exceeded the period allowed for her abſence that evening. I then deſired to know her name and place of reſidence, that my protector might be enabled to thank her in perſon for her civility. This alſo ſhe refuſed, ſaying it was of no importance; ſhe was happy in having the power to render me a ſervice, and begged I would think no more about it.

We now ſeparated. I found my party already at home, ſeated round a blazing fire, and waiting with the moſt painful anxiety for my arrival. Their joy was exceſſive; every face was dreſſed in ſmiles except Mrs. Paiſley's; and her mortification was only to be equalled by the change in her appearance: the flowing treſſes which would have graced the head of Waller's Sachariſſa, or added beauty to the Cleveland of the poliſhed, but licentious Charles,

was

was now wrapped round with an Indian ſhawl, whoſe tawny hue ſtill aided the woeful paleneſs of her countenance, and contraſted her roſy-tinted robe, which in the ſcuffle had been nearly ſevered from her ſhoulders.

The whole party being once more collected, a cheerful ſupper ſoon diſſipated our ſorrows; my good protector laughed heartily at the folly of his kinſman, who for his ill-conſidered pleaſantry had been hiſſed and hooted by the enraged audience. Mrs. Pew thought this ſpecimen of public entertainment rather too perſonal to be reliſhed; and as this was her firſt viſit to the metropolis, ſhe reſolved that it ſhould alſo be her laſt. Mr. Paiſley attributed the whole ridicule of the evening to my narrow-brimmed hat, and reprobated my want of taſte, in appearing at the Theatre in a "vulgar cloth riding-dreſs," when he had "made

up

up a new ſatin waiſtcoat, during the laſt Chriſtmas holidays, merely to *eſcort* a party of ladies thither from the neighbourhood of Whitechapel."

I offered a thouſand apologies for the apparent neglect of my dreſs; and moſt truly aſſured Mr. Paiſley, that I would never venture again in public under ſimilar diſadvantages. So paſſed the night, till we retired to reſt. I ſlept but little, and roſe early to inform you of our dramatic adventure; which, for variety of incidents, both tragic and comic, will ſcarcely be equalled in the annals of the Theatre.

Believe me yours, and farewell.

LETTER XLVII.

The Same to the Same.

London, Dec. 4, 1796.

YESTERDAY being Sunday, and conſequently a day of reſt, Mr. Paiſley, during breakfaſt, propoſed hiring a hackney-coach for the morning, and driving about, to ſhew his kinſwoman, Mrs. Pew, the public buildings, and the *ſmarts* at the weſt end of the metropolis. I would have declined being of the party; but he would take no denial: and, as St. Paul's clock ſtruck eleven, Mr. and Mrs. Pew, Mr. and Mrs. Paiſley, and myſelf, ſet out in ſearch of ſubjects for obſervation. The coachman was directed to drive firſt to Pall-Mall, then up St. James's-ſtreet, and Bond-

Bond-ſtreet, through Oxford-road, down Park-lane, and along Piccadilly.

We proceeded without interruption, till we came to Pall-Mall, where the coachman was ordered to ſtop, that Mrs. Pew might have an opportunity of ſeeing a part of the Royal Family, then breakfaſting at Carleton-Houſe. It is not in the power of language to deſcribe the eagerneſs which all eyes evinced on this intereſting occaſion. Mrs. Pew declared that ſuch a ſight was worth travelling a thouſand miles for: the good curate wiped his green ſpectacles at leaſt a dozen times; and Mrs. Paiſley wondered "what their Majeſties would ſay, at her appearing before them in a cloſe-bordered night-cap!" Mr. Paiſley was more confident in his hopes; for he aſſured the party, that "when his gracious Sovereign came to prayers at St. Paul's, he more than once condeſcended to look at him; and what was

ſtill

ſtill an higher honour, his great-grandfather, who was a rich velvet-weaver in Spitalfields, had abſolutely wove the coronation robe of the firſt George that ſat upon the throne of Great Britain."

"Indeed!" ſaid Mrs. Pew. "I never heard that your family had been ſo honoured."

"Yes!" interrupted Mr. Paiſley: "and there is intereſt now buſy for obtaining a knighthood, which will make ſome folks a lady, and ſome other folks die with envy."

"Ridiculous!" ſaid the curate, ſettling his ſpectacles.

"Why ſo?" cried Mr. Paiſley, ſomewhat piqued by the ſarcaſtic expreſſion: "a title is a title; and the newer it is, the longer it is likely to laſt." As he concluded this ſagacious obſervation, the carriages drew up to the door; but, woeful to relate! the Royal viſitors had proceeded

proceeded through the Park to the Queen's Houſe, and we, after waiting an hour and twenty minutes, were obliged to continue our *route*, both vexed and diſappointed.

The coach ſoon reached Piccadilly, where we again ſtopped, to take a diſtant view of Buckingham-Houſe. Here again many wiſe obſervations were made by Mr. Paiſley and his worthy kinſwoman, the wife of my good curate. The intelligent cit remarked, that the houſe was a country-houſe, to all intents and purpoſes; and that, for his part, he ſhould prefer it even to Clapham-Common or Hampſtead-Heath. Mrs. Pew thought it a little, mean, pitiful bit of a place for a Queen to live in; and declared that ſhe expected to find the reſidence of her excellent Majeſty as large as the whole Park. "Why, any body may live in ſuch a houſe as that," ſaid ſhe; and even our manſion at Denmore Park

is

is as princely, for aught I ſee to the contrary. To be ſure, the inſide may have ſomething to recommend it. I ſuppoſe all the furniture is ſilver and gold."

Mr. Paiſley laughed heartily at his kinſwoman's ſimplicity. "Silver and gold!" repeated he; why, ſuch gingergerbread ſtuff is quite out of faſhion. Nothing goes down now but printed cottons. I have ſold the furniture for at leaſt twenty noblemen's houſes within the laſt ſix months, and, to ſpeak the truth, there is nothing half ſo genteel or elegant."

"You aſtoniſh me!" ſaid Mrs. Pew. "Then, according to your account, our poor bit of a parſonage is as well furniſhed as a palace."

"It has more comforts," ſaid her huſband, again cleaning his ſpectacles.

"But it cannot be ſo gay," ſaid Mrs. Pew.

"Much

"Much gayer!" was the curate's laconic anſwer.

"On my conſcience I ſhould not find it ſo," added the ſimple inquirer.

"Pardon me, my love," interrupted the worthy curate: "it is your conſcience that would make it ſo."

"And do their Majeſties paſs their time as we do?"

"Pretty nearly the ſame."

"And dreſs like us? I ſhould like mightily to ſee what ſort of clothes they wear: nothing but ſilks and velvets, I ſuppoſe?"

"No, no! Her Majeſty, God bleſs her! has more taſte," ſaid Mr. Paiſley. "She wears nothing but muſlin and coloured calico, the moſt becoming dreſs a lady can invent. I ſold twenty pieces of Britiſh cambric to the Lady Mayoreſs only yeſterday; and you know, after her Majeſty, ſhe is the firſt perſonage in the kingdom—"

The curate ſmiled.

"During twelve months, and in the city," ſaid he.

Mrs. Pew now inquired, whether the manners of the great were the ſame as thoſe of common people?

"The manners of the great," replied the curate, "are preciſely the ſame as the very loweſt of the people. The village of Denmore is but the epitome of the largeſt metropolis, with this difference only, that it has leſs vice, and more tranquillity."

"Dear me! then I came to London for nothing!" ſaid Mrs. Pew. "I am quite diſappointed."

"O! you have not ſeen half the ſights yet," ſaid Mr. Paiſley. "You muſt go to Exeter 'Change to view the wild beaſts, and to Sadler's Wells to hear the man talk without ſpeaking; and to Aſtley's to ſee the horſe wiſer than his maſter; and we muſt get you

to

to come up to town at the next Swan-hopping, one of the prettieſt entertainments that we citizens have; you can't think how funny it is."

Mrs. Paiſley now reminded her huſband that dinner was to be on the table at two o'clock: at the ſame time informing him that it was then near one.

"Well! we have had a pleaſant morning," ſaid he: "and I don't grudge the coach-hire, if the ladies have been entertained." You will ſmile at the obſervation, when you recollect the extent of our amuſements.

The coachman was now ordered to drive back as faſt as poſſible to Cheapſide.

"The dinner will not be worth a farthing," ſaid Mr. Paiſley, thruſting his round perſon through the window.

"I am ſorry for it," replied the coachman with ſome humour: "for by the time my cattle gets back to

St. Paul's, 'tis odds but you're hungry." So ſaying he moved ſlowly on, the miſerable animals being benumbed with cold, and the coach containing five perſons, two of whom were of the moſt weighty conſideration.

Mr. Paiſley's temper began to loſe its uſual complacency before we arrived at the end of Pall-Mall; but the equeſtrian ſtatue at Charing-croſs, and the Lion on the parapet of Northumberland houſe, demanding ſome tribute of notice and approbation, he was diverted from his ill-humour, and expatiated on their beauties till we reached the Strand. The weather now changed, and a heavy fall of ſnow coming on rapidly, Mr. Paiſley again exhorted the coachman to quicken his pace, adding, that "the ladies were ſhivering with cold."

"So am I," ſaid the lord of the whip, ſtill jogging on without haſtening his horſes, which proceeded at a foot-

pace,

pace, till we paſſed the New Church, where the dial preſented the exact hour at which dinner was to be on the table. Mr. Paiſley propoſed walking; for there was not a ſingle hackney-coach upon the ſtand: "the ſnow won't be much," ſaid he, "and what is a little ſprinkling to the loſs of a good dinner?"

The coach was ſtopped, and the ſubject was debated: Mrs. Paiſley was without a hat; but ſhe 'could eaſily borrow one from a friend in Fleet-ſtreet:' Mrs. Pew had on her new bonnet with yellow ribands; but ſhe 'could cover that with her pocket-handkerchief.' The coachman, thinking that we were diſpoſed to reſt after the fatigues of the morning, quitted his box and entered a public-houſe. Mr. Paiſley now opened the coach door, and putting down the ſtep, began to hand out his companions. No ſooner had we all deſcended from the crazy

vehicle, than the coachman returned, demanded ſeven ſhillings for the morning's drive, and concluded by remarking, that he was glad to ſee them "ſhoot their rubbiſh," for his "poor cattle never drew ſuch a heavy load ſince they were turned out of the King's Mews, God bleſs him!"

"None of your ſauce," cried Mr. Paiſley. "You ſhall have but three ſhillings; I have taken your number."

"So have I yours," replied the minor wit. "Juſt five!—The more's my patience."

"You're a low fellow," ſaid Mr. Paiſley.

"Not ſo low by ten inches as little big-wig," ſaid the coachman.

Mr. Paiſley now began to wax warm, and was proceeding along the pavement, when the curate taking five ſhillings from his waiſtcoat pocket, tendered it to the coachman.

"I won't

"I won't take it," ſaid he. "I haven't been treated like a gem'man; I know a thing or two, and won't ſubmit to be compoſed upon."

"Five ſhillings for three hours, is more than your fare," ſaid Mr. Pew.

"*You* needn't talk," retorted the coachman: "for your *fair* is a thumper, and my poor cattle know it. But ſince you comes to argyfy, I muſt tell you that I often gets half a ſhiner for driving only fifty yards, and a Dook into the bargain."

"A Duke may be a blockhead as well as another man," ſaid the curate.

"I believe you are a Jacobite by your talk," ſaid the coachman.

"Fellow," ſaid Mrs. Pew, with half ſtifled rage, "do you know who you are ſpeaking to?"

"Yes, I does," anſwered the ſaucy fellow. "I ſpeaks to a little parſon with an inch of ſhoulders and a buſhel

of wig." The mob, which had collected round us, began to find amuſement in the controverſy, and it was warmly encouraged on both ſides. The ſhops being ſhut, no place of retreat preſented itſelf, and I tremblingly anticipated a ſecond part of our dramatic adventure, when a coach appeared in ſight, in which to my unutterable confuſion, I diſcovered the Ducheſs of Aldborough.

The carriage was ſtopped, and I thought I ſhould ſink upon the pavement. The whole party was immediately recognized by her Grace; Mr. Pew and his wife being well known to her, and their kinſman having ſerved her as a linen-draper, through the recommendation of the curate. The Ducheſs adviſed Mr. Paiſley to pay the coachman his demand, rather than to hazard a ſtreet riot on a Sunday."

"To oblige your Grace I will ſettle the difference," ſaid Mr. Paiſley, bowing.

"Do, brother," whiſpered Mrs. Pew: "for if my Lord ſhould hear of the matter, we ſhall never get the living of Denmore." Mr. Paiſley now offered ſeven ſhillings.

"I will have nine," ſaid the coachman. "I have been kept an hour waiting your humour, and now I'll pleaſe my own. And I wonder how a clergyman can think of breeding ſuch a rumpus, when he ought to be in his pulpit preaching better manners."

"There!" cried Mrs. Pew, "I ſaid it would be ſo! My Lord will hear of it, and all your preferment is at an end for ever: give him the two ſhillings and let him go."

The Ducheſs now inquired when I had heard from Lord Denmore. I informed her that he had never conde-

ſcended to notice me ſince his departure for the Continent.

"I am ſorry for it!" ſaid her Grace, ſighing. "You do not deſerve to be ſo cruelly neglected." There was a dejection in her voice and manner which I obſerved with uneaſineſs; ſhe was much altered, and aged in her appearance, during the ſhort period ſince I had laſt ſeen her. The conduct of Lady Denmore ſeemed to bend her towards the grave; and though her tongue was ſilent, her looks ſeverely reproached me.

While we were talking, Mr. Paiſley and Mr. Pew ſtood near the carriage with their heads uncovered; while the good curate's wife, by frequent geſtures of reſpect, excited the Ducheſs's attention, and the mirth of the ſurrounding populace. I therefore propoſed taking my leave, dreading a new embarraſſment, and the coachman being ſatisfied,

ſatisfied, I reluctantly bade the Ducheſs farewell, and proceeded with my companions on foot towards Cheapſide.

As we paſſed St. Dunſtan's church, the clock ſtruck four. Mr. Paiſley's features expreſſed the very acme of diſtreſs. Here it was our good fortune to meet an empty coach, which we all eagerly entered. Proceeding down Fleet-ſtreet we were again ſtopped, and the coachman informed us that a gentlewoman was calling to us from a window on the oppoſite ſide of the way. We now beheld Mrs. Paiſley loudly vociferating, "Take me in, take me in."

"You muſt follow us," ſaid Mr. Paiſley: I am famiſhed, and can ſtay no longer." The coachman drove on, while Mrs. Paiſley continued to cry aloud, "Stop that hackney-coach; ſtop thoſe horſes"

Several perſons now ran after the carriage, but the coachman whipping

his horſes, galloped furiouſly down Fleet-ſtreet, till at the bottom of Ludgate-hill, meeting a Bath mail-coach which was making its way in defiance of every obſtacle, the wheels became entangled, and we were inſtantly overſet upon the pavement.

This was the climax of our day's adventures! A crowd immediately ſurrounded the reverſed vehicle; and, in a few minutes, we were all once more extricated from our dilemma with no bones broken. The hack was ſhattered almoſt to pieces; Mr. Pew, in pity to the coachman's misfortune, preſented him half a guinea; his wife bound the poor fellow's bleeding forehead with her handkerchief; and Mr. Paiſley hurried towards home with more than ordinary activity.

We followed, and at a few minutes paſt five o'clock reached Cheapſide, all heartily delighted to find ourſelves once more

more in a ſafe and quiet aſylum, excepting Mr. Paiſley, who conſidered the ſpoiling of his dinner as one of the greateſt misfortunes that could afflict him.

Such of the diſhes as were eatable, were now ſet before us. The turtle-ſoup was excellent, and Mr. Paiſley commenced his meal growling and gormandizing with moſt laborious avidity. The fate of Lady Denmore hung heavily upon my heart, and the viciſſitudes of the morning had ſo exhauſted my ſpirits, that my appetite was entirely gone.

We had ſcarcely ſeated ourſelves at table, when Mrs. Paiſley arrived; all the ſmothered chagrin of her huſband now burſt forth in vehement reproaches. "It was your fault," ſaid he: "and I only wiſh you had been in the coach inſtead of me."

"Why,

"Why, what has happened?" inquired Mrs. Paiſley, alarmed by her huſband's evident diſpleaſure.

"A pretty commence, that's all!" ſaid Mr. Paiſley. "Upſet on Ludgate-hill, the coach ſmaſhed all to ſhivers, and the poor fellow's head beat nearly as flat as a flounder! and all along with your curſed ſqualling. But, thank God! it will be in the papers, and the print-ſhops; and you'll be finely hauled over the coals in the city; the whole town will have ſomething to talk of for theſe ſix months to come, and I am glad of it."

Mrs. Paiſley's confuſion was viſible.

"Theſe may be London manners, brother," ſaid Mrs. Pew: "but, in our part of the country, they would be called no manners at all. Siſter is not at all to blame; for who but you ever thought of leaving a wife to take care of herſelf,

and to bear all ſorts of inſults from the world."

"Many people," growled Mr. Paiſley, ſtill exhibiting his appetite more than his good humour. "Nobody cares for wives, but thoſe that are hugger-mugged up in country villages. 'Tisn't the faſhion."

"The more is the pity," ſighed Mrs. Pew; "no good can come of ſuch wickedneſs. Why, Aaron and I have been married thirty years come Michaelmas, and never exchanged three words during the whole period."

"There it is!" ſaid Mr. Paiſley. "I and my wife have been married only ten, and, excepting when ſhe is aſleep, ſhe never ceaſes talking: one may as well live in a mill, for her tongue is always going."

"I am ſure I talk to no purpoſe," ſaid Mrs. Paiſley, colouring.

"True!"

"True!" cried her huſband ſarcaſtically.

Mr. Pew helped her to ſome ſoup; while his wife declared that, if this was London, ſhe never wiſhed to viſit it again. Then turning to me, ſhe added, "We will ſoon be moving for the village, my dear; I neither like town amuſements nor town manners: we have no ſuch doings down at Denmore Park. Though my Lord has parted from my Lady, all the world ſays it was her fault; for a better huſband never breathed than my Lord, though I ſay it."

"That doesn't make it a bit the truer," muttered Mr. Paiſley.

"You are very rude, brother," ſaid Mrs. Pew peeviſhly.

"Peace, peace!" interrupted the curate, ſhaking his head, and ſoftening his voice. "I hate quarrelling and diſſenſion: this life is ſhort; be friends,

and

and let every body have their own opinion: contradiction will ferment the violence of wrath; and patient complacency is the beſt antidote for anger."

"Preach away, doctor!" ſaid Mr. Paiſley. "We always ſay grace after dinner." The good curate, piqued by the ſarcaſtic rudeneſs of his kinſman, was ſilent during the remainder of the meal, though Mrs. Pew, by much pouting, and many glances of contempt, expreſſed the reſentment which ſhe felt for the conduct of her relation."

The table being cleared, Mrs. Pew ſeriouſly addreſſed her brother-in-law. "I ſhall make a point of the doctor's returning with me to Denmore Parſonage to-morrow," ſaid ſhe: "I did not come jaunting up to town to be treated like nothing, nor to ſee my huſband the make-game of your ſervants. We will go back to-morrow."

After

After a ſhort pauſe, "We will, my dear," ſaid the curate placidly.

"You are never ſo reſpectable as in your own pariſh," added Mrs. Pew.

"Never, my love," cried her mild and approving huſband.

"Then if Miſs St. Leger has no objection, we will take places in the ſtage for to-morrow morning."

"With all my heart," ſaid the curate.

I bowed aſſent; and Mr. Paiſley remarked, that "when folks were ſo peeviſh, the ſooner they were gone the better."

So ended the moſt intereſting adventures of the day: and I cloſe my letter heartily tired, both mentally and corporeally; having ſcarcely power to bid you a ſhort farewell.

LETTER XLVIII.

The Same to the Same.

London, Dec. 6, 1796.

I PASSED a melancholy night, after writing my laſt letter: the impropriety of Lady Denmore's conduct, and the viſible diſtreſs which the amiable Ducheſs felt on the occaſion, gave riſe to a train of ſad and awful ruminations. I contemplated, in the one, a victim of thoſe affections which it is not within the ſcope of human fortitude to conquer; in the other, the fatal ſource of ſorrows, brought on an unhappy child by a falſe and barbarous ambition. The deſtiny of Lady Denmore preſented a ſtriking example, that, do what we may, if a paſſion is once rooted in the heart,

it

it will ſooner or later evince itſelf: for where is the boſom that knows the controul of thoſe affections which are the offspring of ſenſibility, and can ſubdue their progreſs.

The heart muſt love, or it will be dead to every noble, every ſublime propenſity. The ſenſes muſt have an object to pleaſe, or they will ſink into inanity. None but the ſordid and the ſelfiſh live for themſelves; the law of nature is ſociability; and by uniting the intereſts of the heart, we cement the bonds of ſociety. Poor is the boaſted ſcorn of the miſanthrope: his vaunted hatred of the human race ſtamps him with brutality. Were it not inſtinctive to feel, to cheriſh the affections of the ſoul, we ſhould not nurſe unnumbered, hopeleſs ſorrows, linger round the ſcene of departed viſions, ſhiver at the apathy of indifference, and rather chooſe to love without a proſpect of return, than

to

to exiſt amidſt the gratifications of every minor feeling. Even the miſeries of the lover bring with them a ſad delight, which is unknown to every other ſorrow: and that being who is either too trifling or too dull to experience a genuine paſſion, a faſcination of the heart, will wander over the world in vain for delight or conſolation. He will fancy himſelf happy at the very moment when his mind ſickens with ſatiety; he will vegitate through life without really exiſting; and, by purſuing a phantom, which he calls amuſement, he will deaden all the glowing faculties of the ſoul, till they become totally extinguiſhed. Ah, Frances! I muſt love, or I muſt ceaſe to live. Indifference would inevitably deſtroy me.

I have paſſed the whole night in gloomy reveries: the ſtate of Lady Denmore's family has filled my boſom with

with ſorrow, as the departure of my guardian has chilled it with unkindneſs. I never again can meet that being, whoſe widowed heart will hourly reproach me: I cannot claim that place in his affections, which ſhe once held, and merited. I cannot ſmile to know, that ſhe is neglected and abandoned by the world, while I revel in that luxury which ſhe once enjoyed. Every hour would preſent her to my fancy; every dream would give her to my view—a ſtern, reproving viſion; I ſhudder, even at the idea.

As ſoon as I have cloſed this letter, I ſhall prepare for my return to Denmore Parſonage. My kind and artleſs aſſociates are already weary of this noiſy, buſy ſcene, and impatient to enjoy their beloved and peaceful ſolitude. Heaven knows how ſincerely I coincide with them in my opinion of the world; how little

little I eſteem the great, how greatly I diſdain the little!

I am ſummoned to breakfaſt.—Adieu.

LETTER XLIX.

The Same to the Same.

Dec. 10, 1796.

I WROTE my laſt letter on the morning of the day which was fixed for our departure. The hours till noon were employed in domeſtic concerns; and, ſoon after dinner, we all ſet out for the inn, from whence the ſtage-coach was to take its departure. Mr. and Mrs. Pew were no leſs weary of the metropolis than myſelf, and with equal ſatiſfaction anticipated the calm delights of rational and ſtill retirement.

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The day was clear and froſty. Mr. Paiſley, whoſe civilities were no leſs marked, than the ſingularity of his character, inſiſted on walking with us to the inn. At three o'clock we ſet out. We had not proceeded as far as the end of Cheapſide, when I obſerved two men following us, and, to my infinite ſurpriſe, heard one of them mention my name. I turned round, and, looking at them, obſerved the one nodding his head ſignificantly at the other, at the ſame time ſaying, "this is Miſs St. Leger in the riding-habit."

I now, in a low voice, informed Mrs. Pew of what had paſſed, and the fact being corroborated by Mr. Paiſley, on whoſe arm I leaned, the unſuſpecting curate, with a formal bow, approached the ſtrangers: "Pray, gentlemen," ſaid he, "what is your buſineſs with this young lady?"

"What

"What young lady?" inquired one of our purſuers.

"Miſs St. Leger," replied Mr. Pew. "You ſeem to know her; and I muſt requeſt that you will either aſſign a cauſe for following her, or immediately relinquiſh a purſuit that is extremely unpleaſant."

"That is as we think it," ſaid one of the men: "the ſtreet is broad enough for us all, and your big wig into the bargain."

"You are a very ſaucy fellow," cried Mrs. Pew: "and the doctor only diſgraces himſelf by condeſcending to converſe with you."

"True," ſaid the ſtranger: "he had better keep his ſermon for his pariſhioners; we don't want to hear his preaching."

I requeſted Mrs. Pew not to regard the impertinence of our unknown purſuers, but to walk on without hazarding

another *rencontre*. We proceeded along the pavement, and the two men continued to follow us, laughing, whiſpering, and making a variety of grimaces, in ridicule of my forbearing companion.

We now reached the place of deſtination, and the ſtage-coach was already at the door on the point of departing. Mr. Paiſley having embraced his kinſwoman, the good curate took my hand to aſſiſt me in entering the carriage, when one of the men ruſhing forward, ſeized me by the arm, and forced me from him. I ſhrieked. Mr. Pew again caught my hand, and held it firmly, at the ſame time demanding to know the cauſe of ſuch an outrage.

"Aſk about," replied the ruffian who detained me.

"Whom can we aſk?" cried the ſimple Mrs. Pew. "Nobody ſeems to know you: Are you robbers? what do you want?"

"Nothing

"Nothing that belongs to you," anſwered the ſtranger: "but the law muſt take its courſe."

A number of perſons ſoon aſſembled round the carriage: the day was cloſing, and my terror was unutterable. The coachman could ſtay no longer. Mr. Pew having ſeated his wife in her place, now appealed to the populace; but to my utter aſtoniſhment every one gazed, and no one offered me protection.

Mr. Paiſley, who began to ſuſpect the real cauſe of the adventure, propoſed entering the inn, and demanding an explanation. The ſtrangers inſtantly acquieſced, and in a few minutes we were informed, that I was a priſoner under an arreſt for two hundred pounds, at the ſuit of Mrs. Blonzely. My conſternation was undeſcribable.

Our ſituation was perplexing in the extreme. I threw myſelf into a chair

near the window, and inſtantly my eyes met an object which elucidated the myſtery. This was no other than the civil young lady whom I had met in the pit at the theatre, and who had kindly accompanied me home to Mr. Paiſley's.

It was in vain I aſſured the perſon who detained me that I did not legally owe Mrs. Blonzely the ſum ſhe demanded. The charge was made for board and lodging, for which I was informed that, though under age, I might be arreſted. I pleaded inability to pay the ſum; declared that the promiſſory note had been extorted from me, and that the whole tranſaction was nothing leſs than an infamous impoſture.

"That you muſt prove and ſettle in a court of law," ſaid the bailiff. "We ſhall do our duty."

"Who,

"Who, and what is Mrs. Blonzely?" ſaid Mr. Pew calmly.

"That's not my buſineſs," replied the bailiff. "She keeps a gay houſe at the weſt end of the town. I dare ſay Miſs can inform you for what purpoſe." Mrs. Pew changed colour, and Mr. Paiſley began to whiſtle. The two ruffians laughed, and I was near ſinking on the floor with confuſion.

"I will not believe it," ſaid the good curate gravely. "There muſt be ſome miſtake; this cannot be the perſon."

"You identified the lady," ſaid the bailiff: "and we thank you; for, to tell you the truth, we were doubtful when ſhe was pointed out to us by the young woman belonging to the plaintiff. We did not expect to ſee ſuch a ſort of perſon by the character of her creditor."

"What is to be done?" cried Mr. Pew, ſighing.

"Nothing ſo ſure as paying the money," cried the bailiff.

"You ſhall have the ſum to-morrow," ſaid Mr. Paiſley. "You may rely on having it."

"We cannot releaſe the priſoner on ſuch conditions," cried one of the men. "She muſt go with us to a place of ſafety for the night; and in the morning you can ſettle the buſineſs with the plaintiff's attorney."

"To what place muſt I go?" ſaid I, burſting into tears.

"To a very genteel lodging," ſaid the fellow laughing: "where we have both lords and ladies every day in the week. You needn't be afraid that your character will ſuffer from being ſeen in our houſe, after living under the roof of mother Blonzely."

The hour growing late, and the myrmidons of the law becoming impatient, a coach was called, and I proceeded

ceeded with the curate and his wife to a place of confinement, the two men our companions in the carriage. On entering the houſe we were uſhered into a parlour full of perſons of various deſcriptions. The curate looked round with placid reſignation, while Mrs. Pew ſeemed nearly overwhelmed with ſhame and confuſion.

The maſter of the houſe now informed me that we might have a more retired apartment, if we thought proper. "We have rooms of all prices," ſaid he, "and viſitors of all ranks; for our houſe is a place of great reſort among people of faſhion."

Mrs. Pew opened her eyes, which had till that moment been bent upon the ground, and looking at the aſtoniſhed curate, in a loud whiſper, exclaimed, "Dear me! what wicked ſtories the fellow is telling! People

of faſhion in this low place!—Impoſſible."

"What airs we give ourſelves," cried a pert milliner, who ſat by the fire-ſide in cloſe converſation with a diſbanded Colonel. "I wonder who made a parſon's wife of ſo much conſequence."

"Don't laugh at little big-wig," interrupted the Colonel, "leſt to ſcreen him from our ridicule the lady ſhould put him in her pocket." A loud laugh followed this coarſe witticiſm, but Mr. Pew's countenance loſt nothing of its placidity.

"We had better retire to another room," ſaid he calmly.

"I think ſo," cried Mrs. Pew; "for if my Lord was to hear that we were ſeen in ſuch company, God knows what would be the conſequence."

"You had better preach us a ſermon than be ſcurrilous," ſaid an intoxicated buck:

buck: "and perhaps this pretty girl will ſing us a pſalm at the concluſion."

"O, you wicked reprobate," exclaimed Mrs. Pew with indignation: "where do you expect togo when you die."

"Aſk the little man under the cauliflower," ſaid the profligate; "he knows more about the matter than I do."

"We will retire, my dear," ſaid Mr. Pew: "this converſation does not ſuit us."

"That is ſtrange indeed!" ſaid the Colonel; "for here every body is ſuited." Again the clamorous laugh went round, and again the curate evinced his powers of forbearance.

We now aſcended to the firſt floor, where we entered a more decent apartment. Mr. Paiſley, who had promiſed to follow us with bail on our departure from the inn, was not yet come, and

our ſolicitude augmented every moment. There was but one bed vacant in the houſe, and we were informed that no perſon beſide myſelf could be permitted to ſtay after ten o'clock. This intelligence nearly overpowered me. I now anticipated the extent of my miſery, and every moment ſeemed to draw it towards a climax.

While we were awaiting the arrival of Mr. Paiſley, a letter was delivered, addreſſed "To the Reverend Aaron Pew." He opened it, and, by the changes of his countenance, I perceived that its contents were of no ſmall importance.

From his frequent glances at me during the time that he was reading, I naturally concluded that I was the ſubject of the letter. Mr. Pew's hand trembled as he took off his ſpectacles; and his wife on peruſing the pernicious paper, became as pale as aſhes. My fears anticipated ſome new misfortune, but

but I had not courage to requeſt an explanation. I thought, as my eyes glanced over the ſuperſcription, that I knew the writing; but the view was tranſient, and I ſtill remained in a ſtate of incertitude.

The moment now arrived when all viſitors were ordered to depart. It was in vain that I requeſted leave for my friends to remain that night in the houſe; it was equally uſeleſs that they entreated to ſit up with me; the rule of the place was to prohibit the uſe of fire and candles, and I was, with an almoſt breaking heart, left alone in a den of undeſcribable horrors.

My companions had not taken their leave without evident ſigns of ſorrow. The good curate ſhed tears; and the boſom of Mrs. Pew ſeemed to throb with a mixture of regret and pity.

As they quitted the room in ſadneſs, Mr. Pew, with a deep ſigh, preſented

me the letter which he had juſt received. I opened it haſtily, and found it contained theſe words:

'The impoſtor, whom Lord Denmore has placed under your protection, is no other than his miſtreſs, and the cauſe of his domeſtic ſorrow. If you value your reputation, or reſpect the ſanctity of your function, you will relinquiſh the charge impoſed on you, and leave the profligate to the puniſhment that awaits her.'

The exceſs of ſorrow in a great meaſure deadens our feelings; and we are ſometimes more acutely wounded by trifling griefs, than by events of the moſt powerful importance. This truth my heart confeſſed, while I read the anonymous letter. I traced the malevolent lines with more ſcorn than inquietude; I had too long been overſhadowed by afflictions of a deeper colour,

colour, to regard the ſlanders of an unknown aſſaſſin. With a ſtern contempt I threw the letter on the ground, and was abſorbed in thought, when the maſter of the houſe entered the room. His face wore a ſmile of ſatisfaction, and his manner had more of reſpect in it, than I had before diſcovered. His words were brief, as his viſit was abrupt. "You are free, madam," ſaid he: "your debt is diſcharged; and a ſervant waits below, to convey you to the houſe of your benefactreſs, the Ducheſs of Aldborough."

My aſtoniſhment was infinite. I had ſcarcely power to utter a ſyllable: the ſudden change in my proſpects filled my fluttering heart with undeſcribable ſenſations; and I followed the meſſenger of freedom to the ſtreet-door, where a hackney-coach was waiting to receive me. On entering I found a lady, who informed me that ſhe was the Ducheſs of

Aldborough's friend, employed by her to ſet me at liberty, and to conduct me ſafely to Portman-ſquare.

The hour was paſt midnight. We proceeded along ſeveral ſtreets, and my boſom throbbed with gratitude and hope, while my companion, by the moſt amiable attentions, made time paſs with more than common ſwiftneſs. She expatiated largely on the virtues of my patroneſs; lamented the imprudence of her ill-fated daughter; condemned Mr. Treville's diſhonourable conduct; and ſpoke of Lord Denmore in terms that thrilled my boſom: for though reſentment for the too ſevere puniſhment inflicted on me, by my baniſhment from his ſociety, induced me frequently to blame his credulity, I could not ſuffer a ſyllable of diſreſpect to paſs another's lips, when he was the ſubject of converſation. This may be contradictory, but it is, notwithſtanding, natural.

ral. We love to evince that we can blame; and we often, by blaming, diſcover that we love: for thoſe objects who are indifferent to us, excite no pang ſufficiently acute to authorize reſentment.

The coach proceeded rapidly, and the night was impervioufly dark: added to this, a thick miſt rendered the glimmering and half-extinguiſhed lamps ſcarcely viſible; the diſtance ſeemed endleſs; I queſtioned my companion frequently, why we were ſo long in meaſuring ſo ſhort a ſpace; ſhe diverted me with a variety of anſwers, talked of the Ducheſs's kind intentions, and aſſured me that, in her ſociety, I ſhould be ſafe from every danger.

I now hinted that I thought the hour extremely unſeaſonable for breaking in upon the repoſe of a family, and requeſted my protectreſs to conduct me back

back to Mr. Paiſley's, from whence I would not fail to attend the Ducheſs early in the forenoon. To this propoſal ſhe gave a decided negative. "I muſt obey her Grace's commands; and ſhe has given me poſitive orders not to return without you."

While ſhe was ſpeaking, I loſt ſight of the faintly-glimmering lamps, and we ſeemed on a ſudden to purſue our way in total darkneſs. A thouſand apprehenſions inſtantly thrilled through my heart: I inquired whither we were going; the female, with a laughing tone, again aſſured me that I was perfectly ſafe; and that in a quarter of an hour we ſhould arrive at the place of our deſtination. The coach continued to proceed, and I to tremble. I frequently let down the glaſs; but the fog was ſo opaque, that no object was viſible at five paces from the window. I called repeatedly

repeatedly to the coachman; but he either did not, or would not hear me. My terror now became exceſſive.

I had remained nearly half an hour in this ſtate of inquietude, when the coach ſuddenly ſtopped, and the door was inſtantly opened. My companion, as if with aſſiſtance, for the darkneſs prevented my aſcertaining the circumſtance, leaped from the ſtep; while I felt myſelf cloſely claſped by a perſon, who had at the ſame moment entered on the oppoſite ſide.

Not a word was ſpoken: I ſhrieked; but my reſiſtance was ineffectual: I was placed in another carriage, and the door being inſtantly ſhut, the horſes proceeded with alarming velocity: ſtill my hands were firmly graſped; but of the rank or age of the perſon who guarded me, I had not the faineſt idea.

The night was tempeſtuous; the wind blew a hurricane, and the ſnow

fell

fell inceſſantly. I entreated my companion to inform me whither we were going, and for what purpoſe. Still he was ſilent; and my apprehenſions ſtill augmented.

We now ſtopped to change horſes. The poſtillions had brought them from the inn to the road-ſide, and an aſſiſtant held a torch while they were faſtened to the carriage. I endeavoured to ſpeak; but my companion prevented me. I looked at him as the torch threw a light upon his figure: he was maſked; and I perceived that he held a piſtol within a few inches of my boſom; while he, in a low voice, informed me, that if I uttered a ſyllable, I ſhould periſh. Overcome by the terrors of my ſituation, before the horſes were ready to proceed, I fainted.

On recovering, I found myſelf in a chamber, which only received a borrowed light from a window opening to a ſtaircaſe

ſtaircaſe or paſſage. My conſternation was undeſcribable. I looked through the ſmall panes of glaſs, and perceived a ſpacious landing-place, leading from a wide flight of ſtairs, and hung on each ſide with old family pictures. It was morning, and the duſk had evaporated: but the day was ſtill gloomy, and the light of that yellow hue, which, in the winter months, characteriſes the atmoſphere of this iſland.

While I ſtood contemplating my ſituation, I heard a deep groan, which filled my mind with additional terrors. A ſecond, more lengthened, and marked with an agonized ſtruggle, chilled my heart. I tried the door of my apartment: it was bolted on the outſide. I now broke the panes of glaſs which afforded the falſe light, and with a deſperate reſolution forced the frame which held them. Through the aperture I ſoon got on the landing-place, where

for

for a minute I ſtood, at a loſs how to conduct myſelf; till, actuated by deſpair, and rouſed by a repetition of deeply-laboured murmurs, I darted forward, and with tottering ſteps proceeded along the paſſage.

I was now arreſted by a confuſed noiſe which iſſued from a chamber: it was the hum of words, added to the ſighs and lamenting tones of a female voice, expreſſive of great mental torture. I liſtened, and the blood almoſt froze in my boſom. Twice I placed my hand upon the lock of the door, and as involuntarily removed it, impreſſed by horror, and reſtrained by fear. Still I had not power to depart, though apprehenſion almoſt prevented my breathing. After a pauſe of ſeveral minutes I collected ſufficient reſolution to make a deſperate effort; and ſuddenly opening the door, I entered the chamber.

Oh,

Oh, Frances! how ſhall I deſcribe the ſcene that preſented itſelf? In bed pale, meagre, and emaciated, lay the expiring Lady Denmore. The inſtant her eyes met mine, ſhe uttered a faint ſhriek which ſeemed to pierce my heart. I flew towards her; ſhe put forth her feveriſh hand to meet mine, and with a fixed and penetrating look exclaimed, "Thank Heaven! I have ſtill a friend to cloſe my eyes in death! Oh, Gertrude! behold the laſt ſad ſcene of mortal ſuffering; behold it, and forgive me."

I fell upon my knees, and taking her liſtleſs hand, preſſed it to my boſom. She was doubly agitated; the paleneſs of her face was for a moment faintly fluſhed, and the tears rolled unreſtrained and rapidly on her pillow. My heart was agonized with pity; yet I had no word of conſolation to beſtow, for the

the exceſs of grief is marked by ſilence.

Two attendants, one of whom appeared to be a nurſe, the other a ſervant, ſtood mute with conſternation. I inquired how Lady Denmore came to be thus deſerted, at whoſe houſe we were lodged, and by whom ſhe had ſo barbarouſly been left to periſh? During the time that I was ſpeaking the attendants hung their heads with a mixture of ſhame and ſorrow. I repeated the queſtions; but they were ſtill ſullenly taciturn. I then conjured Lady Denmore to ſatisfy my mind, and to declare her wiſhes. She faintly ſmiled, and feebly anſwered, "It is too late!"

I found that the ſorrows of her weary days were drawing rapidly to their laſt ſcene. I ſaw in her languid eyes, and on her livid lips, the ſignals of approaching diſſolution. She graſped my hand with

with the little ſtrength that was left her, and with a look that would have diſſolved a ſoul of adamant, conjured me not to leave the chamber.

"I have this day made my will," ſaid ſhe: "and to you I leave all which the rapacity of a monſter has left me. My jewels Mr. Treville has diſpoſed of: they were wreſted from me partly by intimidation, and partly by fraud. Ten thouſand pounds have been ſacrificed to his inordinate claims: I have ſtill that ſum at my command; and, as a ſmall retribution for the wrongs which you have patiently endured, it ſhall be yours. I have written to my mother; ſhe will ſee my laſt commands fulfilled; and I truſt that this act of juſtice towards you will induce her to forgive and to lament me."

"Live! live, and deſerve her pardon, as you have mine," ſaid I. I raiſed her on the pillow; ſhe looked more

more compoſed, and embraced me tenderly. A ſaint-like ſerenity on a ſudden marked her features; ſhe ſighed, but it ſeemed more to unburthen her full heart, than to evince its agony. I now requeſted the attendants to leave us for a few moments; with reluctance they obeyed, and Lady Denmore again addreſſed me.

"Take this packet," ſaid ſhe with an impreſſive ſolemnity of tone: "and as ſoon as I am dead unclоſe it. You will there find the clue to all your perſecutions; when you have read it, I charge you, with your own hands, to deliver it to Lord Denmore."

"To Lord Denmore!" repeated I earneſtly.

"Yes; to my huſband," ſaid ſhe faintly: "perhaps he has the power to elucidate the myſtery which attends it." She heſitated; her ſtrength was exhauſted, and I awaited its renovation with

with the moſt painful anxiety. After a ſilence of ſome minutes ſhe continued:

"Intreat my mother to bear the memory of my fate with the fortitude of virtue. Tell her that I have ſuffered ſufficiently for my indiſcretion, if the pangs of conſcious reproof, the neglect of the being in whom I placed confidence, the malignity of the world, and the ruin of my fortune can be deemed puniſhments equal to the frenzy of my conduct."

Lady Denmore's voice became more feeble with every word ſhe uttered. The paleneſs of her cheek, which had in a ſmall degree ſubſided by the fluſh of exertion, now returned with a more death-like appearance. So young, ſo beautiful, ſo miſguided, ſo neglected, ſhe would have excited an intereſt even in a ſtranger's boſom; but I, who had known her only a few months ſince, in the zenith of her luſtre, the admiration

of the world, the ornament of that rank to which ſhe was by birth entitled, I felt more than pity; my heart was burſting with regret, and my mind was agonized by the anticipation of a ſcene, now rapidly and inevitably approaching.

I found upon inquiry that the houſe in which I was placed, was ſituated near Edgware, and hired by Mr. Treville for the purpoſe of concealing the dying Lady Denmore. Fear that her perilous ſituation might be the cauſe of reconciling her to the Ducheſs of Aldborough, and thereby of defeating his deſigns upon her property, induced him to ſelect this retired and ſolitary abode, where the report of her expected death might be ſuppreſſed till ſuch time as he had brought his machinations to a concluſion.

A variety of menaces had been tried to change her purpoſe of leaving me a part

part of her fortune; and the violence which had been uſed in forcing me to the ſcene of villany, was only a prelude to crimes of a more hideous nature. I will write again to-morrow; till then, adieu.

I reſume my pen. The whole morning paſſed in a ſeries of ſorrows. Lady Denmore's languor every moment increaſed; and, before noon, ſhe totally loſt the power of utterance. It was in vain that I endeavoured, by ſoothing words, to revive the quivering flame which now ſcarcely warmed her heart; the faint pulſation barely evinced that ſhe ſtill lived, while the ſhort quick breath menaced, every inſtant, the laſt ſigh from her too ſenſitive boſom. She was the victim of an unconquerable paſſion; the ſuſceptibility of her mind was the ruin of her proſpects, the bane of her reputation, and the undermining

poiſon of her repoſe for ever. Early in life fondly attached, and fatally faſcinated by a being wholly diveſted of honour, ſentiment, and humanity, ſhe fell a ſacrifice to the ſenſibility of her nature. Wedded to a huſband whom ſhe never loved; piqued by jealouſy, and perpetually perſecuted by the monſter who poſſeſſed her affections, her mind yielded to the enthralment of her ſenſes, and, with a romatic fondneſs, ſhe ſacrificed all that was dear to woman, for a wretch who was deeply practiſed in all that was deſpicable in man.

At three o'clock in the afternoon Lady Denmore cloſed her eyes on this precarious, this perplexing ſcene of mortal ſuffering. I ſat upon her bed, and ſupported her exhauſted frame in my trembling arms, bathing her with tears, and watching the approach of that hour which is of all others the moſt awful to contemplate. With her laſt

ſigh

ſigh ſhe looked as though ſhe implored forgiveneſs; ſhe feebly graſped my hand, attempted to ſpeak, ſhook her head, and, without the ſmalleſt appearance of a reſiſting effort, died.

One of her attendants inſtantly ruſhed out of the chamber; and, in a few moments, to my infinite horror and ſurpriſe, Mr. Treville preſented himſelf before me. The blood ſeemed to recede from my heart, at the ſight of a man whom I juſtly conſidered as Lady Denmore's murderer. For I have ſince been informed, that the moſt inſulting ſcorn, the moſt barbarous reproaches, the moſt infamous extortions, and the moſt marked neglect, conſpired to inflict wounds upon her heart, till it was deſtroyed by their repetition.

He approached the bed, and, with a look of perfect indifference, ordered that the corpſe ſhould be conveyed as ſpeedily as poſſible to the Ducheſs

of Aldborough's. Then taking my hand, he added, "You, Gertrude, muſt go with me."

"Whither?" inquired I ſternly.

"That you ſhall know to-morrow," anſwered he ſmiling. "I purchaſed your promiſſory note from Mrs. Blonzeley; I releaſed you from confinement; and I love you too well, after taking ſo much trouble, to part with you."

"Infamous aſſaſſin!" exclaimed I. "Is it not ſufficient that you have deſtroyed this angelic woman? Muſt another victim be added to your triumph? How barbarous, how inſatiable is this ſpecies of vanity!"

"I never loved Lady Denmore," ſaid Mr. Treville careleſsly.

"Then why did you draw her from the ſociety of the world; why expoſe her to its cenſure? It is a poor excuſe after you grow weary of a conqueſt, to ſay that you never valued it."

"Lady

"Lady Denmore was fooliſhly attached to me, and I am ſorry for it," ſaid he. "The affair has terminated rather awkwardly, but in a ſhort time it will be entirely forgotten."

"Never by me," ſaid I, burſting into an agony of tears. "Never by Lord Denmore. Never, oh! never, by the dear venerable woman whom you have rendered childleſs; from whoſe boſom you have wreſted every hope of happineſs." He now took my arm, and endeavoured to force me from the corpſe.

"How can you indulge ſuch melancholy ideas?" ſaid he careleſsly: "if you cry yourſelf blind, you cannot reanimate a breathleſs body. Come, come, be rational; leave this romantic ſorrow to weak and whimpering childhood; you, who know the world, ſhould evince a mind ſuperior to ſuch folly."

My indignation was equal to my grief; the remains of the beautiful, the lamented Lady Denmore, ſeemed to hold me by faſcination. Her cold, damp hand was faſt in mine; her cheek was yet ſcarcely livid; her eyes but newly cloſed in the ſleep of death; and yet the being for whom ſhe periſhed ſtood by, calmly preaching patience, and profeſſing to love another object, far, far her inferior in every power of attraction! I ſhudder while I deſcribe the ſcene, and almoſt wonder how I had courage to ſurvive it.

Mr. Treville, finding that my abhorrence of his conduct was equal to my regret for the death of Lady Denmore, now ſternly commanded me to quit the chamber. "Since you will not be reaſonable without conſtraint, I muſt compel you," ſaid he. "The body muſt be conveyed to Portman-

ſquare

ſquare this evening. A ſhell is ready, and the hearſe will be at the door in half an hour. By that period a friend of mine will be here, to unite us for ever."

My whole frame ſeemed petrified with horror! This unfeeling propoſal completed the atrocity of Mr. Treville's machinations, and I could anticipate no climax more refined in villany. My words appeared to die upon my tongue, before I had power to utter them; my tears were arreſted in their ſource, and my limbs were become rigid with convulſive ſpaſms. I fell upon the corpſe, and, claſping it in my arms, gave way to the moſt unbounded ſorrow.

I preſently heard a confuſed noiſe on the ſtairs; and immediately the door was opened, by two men who bore a ſhell which was deſtined to incloſe the body. The feelings of my heart now maſtered its diſcretion. I

ſhrieked aloud: I threw myſelf acroſs the bed, and for a time reſiſted every effort that was made to remove the ſcarcely cold remains of Lady Denmore. But my ſtrength was ſoon overpowered; and with a nearly frantic brain, I beheld the beautiful clay ſhut from my ſight for ever.

Mr. Treville, on whom the ſcene of melancholy events made no impreſſion, more than once ſmiled at my diſtracted appearance. The anguiſh which wrung my boſom was of a nature that defies the power of deſcription. I was by turns wildly frantic and ſullenly deſponding as the extravagance of grief exhauſted itſelf, or the mind laboured in ſilence with the conflicts that oppreſſed it. The death of Lady Denmore was an event ſo impreſſive, that it ſeemed to render all others leſs painfully intereſting. I ſaw the ſhell borne from the chamber; I heard it deſcending the ſtairs;

ſtairs; and, amidſt the gloom of evening, I faintly traced it along the garden path to the gate, where the hearſe was waiting to receive it.

The rattling of the wheels ſeemed to convey a ſound unaccountably mournful. I liſtened till by degrees it died away, and, retiring from the window, gazed around me with augmented diſtreſs. The abſence of Lady Denmore, whom, not three hours before I had ſeen living, whoſe tears had bathed my cheek, whoſe feveriſh hands had preſſed me to her boſom, preſented a vacuum at once ſolemn and terrific. The bed on which ſhe died, the chamber in which ſhe cloſed the ſcene of mortal anguiſh, and the preſence of the being whoſe unkindneſs had deſtroyed her, filled my mind with ſenſations ſo torturing, that reaſon began to ſicken, and I was yielding myſelf up to the dominion of deſpair.

Mr. Treville now aſſumed a new and more ſubtle deportment. He began by ſoothing me with the affected language of regret; aſſured me that he ſincerely lamented Lady Denmore's death; and that, though he never loved her beyond the vanity of the moment, he would cheerfully have devoted his days to the promotion of her happineſs. "For," added he, "humanity is one of the brighteſt ornaments of the human ſoul!" He was proceeding, when I ſternly interrupted him.

"Degrade not the celeſtial impulſe," ſaid I, "by ſuffering its eulogy to proceed from a boſom ſo contaminated. Your hypocriſy will only deepen the colour of your crime, and render it more conſpicuous to the eye of reflection."

"Your eloquence is only equalled by your beauty," ſaid Mr. Treville: "to both I am a convert. The death of Lady

Lady Denmore leaves me at full liberty; and, from this hour, no chain but yours ſhall hold me."

As he ſpoke, a ſtranger entered the room. Mr. Treville preſented him as his particular friend; and, by the habit which he wore, I concluded he was a clergyman. This opinion was ſpeedily confirmed by a propoſal that he ſhould immediately unite us. I ſhuddered at the idea. The pale corpſe of Lady Denmore, which was yet ſcarcely cold, ſeemed to glide before me. I had not power to articulate my abhorrence of the deed, but ſtood transfixed with horror, trembling and aſtoniſhed.

Mr. Treville availed himſelf of my conſternation; and taking my hand, which fear had rendered powerleſs, led me to another apartment on the ground-floor, the windows of which opened on an extenſive ſhrubbery. The ſtranger again urged me to conſent, while his ſubtle

ſubtle aſſociate knelt at my feet, and profeſſed the moſt ardent affection. "It is by Lord Denmore's deſire that I wiſh for this union," ſaid he: "I have a promiſe under his hand, that, if I prevail on you to receive my propoſals, he will ſettle the ſum of twenty thouſand pounds upon us: the engagement is in every reſpect valid; and the only thing you can do, to ſave your fame, is to accept my offer without farther heſitation."

"My fame is in no danger," ſaid I: "neither do I credit the ſtory you repeat. Lord Denmore was too wiſe and too liberal to barter for my happineſs, even with one whom he conſidered as his friend."

Mr. Treville now, with an inſulting ſmile, drew from his pocket the written promiſe, and, to my utter amazement, it was exactly what he had reported; ſigned and ſealed by Lord Denmore, and dated

dated on the day which was originally fixed for my retirement to the Caſtle.

"You now ſee that I have not deceived you," ſaid Mr. Treville: "and you have no remedy, but by inſtantly accepting my hand. Your having quitted Mr. Pew's protection will ſtigmatize your name; and you will be loſt in the opinion of the world, however ſtrenuouſly you may aſſert your innocence. Felicity and fortune will be yours, if you do not play the fool, and ſeek your own deſtruction."

Still my indignant heart repulſed his ſolicitations, though my tongue had not capability to utter its reſentment. My ſilence was interpreted as a tacit acquieſcence; while, without further preliminaries, a book was produced from the ſtranger's pocket, and the marriage ceremony commenced with much apparent ſolemnity.

I knew

I knew too well the forms and attendants on ſo ſacred a contract, to be the dupe of this farcical experiment. I was conſcious that an union could not be legally ſolemnized in the preſence of only one witneſs; and I alſo knew, that I could not be compelled to acquieſcence. Mr. Treville's motives for this ſingular deception were evident. He ſuſpected that Lady Denmore had bequeathed to me a conſiderable part of her fortune, which was at her own diſpoſal, at the period of her deceaſe. He alſo counted largely on my guardian's promiſe, while he conſoled himſelf with the idea, that if both proſpects ſhould fail, he could eaſily ſhake off the title he aſſumed, and, after having betrayed my honour, laugh at my credulity. If, on the contrary, the legacy ſhould prove conſiderable, and my guardian's engagement recoverable by law, he then truſted that, after having

having lived with him as his wife, I ſhould not heſitate to confirm my right to that name in the moſt public and ſacred manner. Thus I traced his motives with an inſtinctive horror; and I determined to counteract them, whatever might be the conſequence.

Mr. Treville, finding that my reſolution was invincible, now propoſed an elopement to the Continent; ſpoke lightly of the world's opinion; conſidered the moral virtues as unimportant, when compared with the ſovereignty of the paſſions; vowed eternal idolatry; declared that love was incompatible with marriage vows; ridiculed the pedantic laws which would throw a ſpell upon the ſenſes; and concluded by reminding me that I was in his power, and that he ſhould not heſitate to exerciſe it, if I continued to reject his offers. He then talked of the rank he held in ſociety; the patronage and friendſhip he experienced

rienced from perſons of the higheſt birth; enumerated the many advantages which I ſhould derive from being the wife of ſuch a huſband; the many pleaſures from being the miſtreſs of ſuch a lover.

I ſtarted. The memory of his infamous conduct towards Lady Denmore made my blood freeze with horror; for I judged what I had to expect from an ungrateful, an abandoned libertine, whoſe rapacity had been equal to his falſehood, and whoſe cunning was only to be matched by his effrontery.

Mr. Treville now opened a ſmall writing-box, and taking out a drawer, preſented it to me. It was filled with Lady Denmore's jewels. I knew them well, becauſe they had adorned her head and boſom on the fatal evening before her elopement from her huſband. I ſhuddered, and was apprehenſive of fainting. "Theſe," ſaid Mr. Treville,

"ſhall

" ſhall be yours. I only got poſſeſſion of them to lay them at your feet: take them, beautiful Gertrude; take them, and be mine for ever."

My indignation at length became violent. I threw them from me, and burſting into an agony of tears, attempted to eſcape through the window. Mr. Treville, finding that neither perſuaſion nor cunning could prevail, had recourſe to violence; when a chaiſe ſtopping at the door, he caught me in his arms, aided by his aſſociate, and endeavoured to bear me towards it.

It was now, for the firſt time, that I recognized, under the diſguiſe of a clergyman, the truſty Scamper, Sir Hector Upas's late amanuenſis, but now the confidential ſervant of the no leſs atrocious Treville. This diſcovery convinced me that a plan of decided miſchief was in contemplation; and I was almoſt bewildered to madneſs. I endeavoured

deavoured to obtain my freedom by the moſt violent efforts I was capable of making; and Mr. Treville, fearing that my reſiſtance would alarm the neighbourhood, thought it prudent to deſiſt from his deſign of forcibly conveying me to the carriage. Once more at liberty, I felt my courage renovated. Mr. Treville again endeavoured to ſooth me into compliance; and on my repulſing him with augmented reſolution, his prolific mind conjured up a new horror to intimidate and diſtract me.

"All that has paſſed," ſaid he, "is known to Lord Denmore: he has this morning ſent me a challenge; and, by day-break I have promiſed to meet him. The event will unqueſtionably terminate in my favour; for I conſider myſelf as one of the ſureſt markſmen in the kingdom."

This newly-meditated outrage filled my mind with complete deſpair. The life

life of Lord Denmore was menaced, and by the moſt daring of aſſaſſins. I attempted to ſpeak, but my voice was inarticulate. He was convinced, by the exceſs of my agitation, that I had now reached the very acme of human ſorrow; and with an inſulting indifference demanded, whether I had "any thing to ſay, which might induce him to relinquiſh his purpoſe."

I had juſt the power to anſwer, "No."

"Then," cried he, addreſſing Mr. Scamper, "you may get my piſtols ready, and immediately ſet out to inform Lord Denmore, that at ſeven o'clock, near the gate which leads to Kenſington Gardens, he may expect to find me."

"Oh, hear me," ſaid I, nearly overcome by terror and diſtreſs; "and if ever you knew the ſenſations of pity or affection, do not diſpatch ſo horrible a meſſage. Lord Denmore's life is—"

"What?

"What?" ſaid Mr. Treville haſtily.

"Dearer to me than my own. I cannot, I will not ſurvive him."

"Then conſent to quit the kingdom," ſaid Mr. Treville; "for if I remain here, the rencontre muſt take place; and his deſtruction will be inevitable."

"Barbarous alternative! Inhuman and ungrateful monſter!" exclaimed I.

Mr. Treville ſmiled. "You are frantic," ſaid he.

"Almoſt, indeed!" anſwered I. "The death of Lord Denmore will decide my fate; for on him alone my happineſs, my exiſtence depends. I own my folly; I avow my attachment; and I will prove it, by following him even to the grave."

"Convey my meſſage," ſaid Mr. Treville. Mr. Scamper was quitting the room, when, urged by deſpair, I ſeized a piſtol which lay upon the table, and placed myſelf in a defenſive attitude.

Mr. Treville, fearleſs of the conſequences, and depending on the natural timidity of my ſex, ruſhed forward to diſarm me. In the ſtruggle the piſtol was fired; and the ball entering his right ſide, he fell, as I imagined, lifeleſs.

Mr. Scamper inſtantly quitted the room, to call aſſiſtance; while I, ſtrengthened by the peril of my ſituation, leaped through the window into the ſhrubbery. The darkneſs of the evening favoured my eſcape, and I flew with more than natural ſwiftneſs; while fancy formed a thouſand ſtrange and terrific phantoms on every ſide; among which, the ſhadow of Lady Denmore appeared the moſt conſpicuous.

In a few moments I reached a ſmall gate, which opened to a field, and by a long and gloomy avenue I ſhortly after entered the high road. The wind blew loud and chilly, and a drizzling rain ſoon penetrated my thin dreſs. Still I proceeded,

ceeded, urged on by fear, and agonized by conſcious guilt; but I knew not whither I was going, till, by the deep ſound of a funeral bell, I diſcovered that I was near Edgware.

This peal of death increaſed the horrors of my ſituation. Fancy inſtantly preſented the ſcene which I had ſo lately witneſſed near the pillow of the expiring Lady Denmore. A ſoftened ſorrow ſtole into my eyes, and in ſome degree relieved the depreſſion of my boſom; for I had tears for her memory, though Nature denied them to my own afflictions.

As I purſued my path, alone, and deſperately venturous, my eyes were involuntarily raiſed to that vaſt expanſe, which glittered with unknown worlds. I fancied myſelf a ſolitary atom in the vaſt univerſe; an iſolated wanderer; a ſad and weary wretch, whoſe deſtiny was ſorrow. I indulged in all the chimeras

of

of the fataliſt. I endeavoured to believe, that events of every ſpecies were inevitable; that the tablet of my days was written by an immortal hand in characters indelible. "Then why ſhould I repine?" was the conſequent but tacit queſtion. "Since I cannot avert my deſtiny, it matters little whether I waſte my life in tears, or bravely meet my griefs, and wait their termination with a ſtoic's fortitude." The next idea which darted acroſs my brain was ſtill more perplexing. "Why am I expoſed to perpetual trials? why vanquiſhed by the guilty, and precipitated on to the laſt effort of deſpair? Perhaps by my ſufferings I expiate a parent's crime!" The thought conſoled me; and I continued my courſe, rapt in a trance of meditation.

All was ſolitary, cold, and cheerleſs. The intenſe ſeverity of the froſt kept even the pooreſt cottagers within their

home; and no ſound met my ear, but the howling of the wind. Oh, Frances! friend of my happier days, at this ſolemn, terrifying hour, imagination wandered back to ſcenes of infantine delight; to our calm aſylum; to the once ſoothing haunts of Denmore Caſtle; the low and ſimple parſonage; the woods, the wilds, the mountains, and the church-yard! The laſt object ſeemed to preſent a ſource of conſolation, a proſpect of repoſe!

The perturbation of my mind, and the events which, ſince the morning, I had witneſſed, bewildered my ſenſes almoſt to madneſs. Even at that moment my affection for Lord Denmore ſtruggled with the reſentment which his unkindneſs excited, and, amidſt all the miſeries of my fate, I could with joy have crept into his boſom for a ſhelter. Chilled by the world's unkindneſs, and weary of an exiſtence which promiſed

nothing but a chain of misfortunes, hope began to forſake me, and deſpair to ſpread a numbing ſpell upon my nobleſt, proudeſt faculties. I became a timid, trembling, guilty wanderer; ſtartled at every blaſt, and wiſhing every moment for complete annihilation.

I continued to walk haſtily, till I had advanced more than three miles on the road towards London, when meeting a ſtage-coach, the clear moon-light rendering me a conſpicuous object, the driver ſuddenly ſtopped his horſes, and inquired which way I was going.

"Any way," ſaid I, with a faltering voice.

"I have a place vacant," continued he; "and you do not ſeem dreſt for walking. The weather is cold enough to freeze one, even by the fire-ſide; you had better accept my offer."

I ſtood near the horſes' heads; the glaſſes of the coach were all drawn

up, and the propoſal was too tempting to be reſiſted. I recollected that I had a few guineas in my pocket, and as all parts of the habitable globe were alike to me at that moment, I accepted the ſeat without farther heſitation. The coachman inſtantly deſcended from his box, and the door being opened, I threw myſelf into a corner fatigued and almoſt frozen; but you will judge of my aſtoniſhment when I felt myſelf embraced, and heard a paſſenger exclaim, "Thank God! Thank God! we have found you!"

I now, by the light of the moon, and the mildneſs of the voice, diſcovered the traveller to be the good curate; who, with his amiable wife, was returning diſconſolate to Denmore Parſonage. A variety of expreſſions naturally followed this unexpected meeting, to all of which I returned vague and incoherent anſwers. Mr. Pew informed me that his

kinſman,

kinſman, Mr. Paiſley, had early in the morning viſited my priſon with the ſum for which I had been arreſted, in hopes of procuring my liberty. That the diſtreſs of the whole family, on finding I was gone, was ſcarcely deſcribable; that immediate inquiries had been made at the Ducheſs of Alborough's, and that the reſult of them was productive of additional anxiety. I heard the detail of events with a ſtupor which even gratitude could not diſſipate. I looked perpetually through the glaſſes towards Edgware; my eyes were fixed, and my blood ſcarcely ſeemed to circulate. Mr. Pew, concluding that my intellects were diſordered, propoſed ſtopping for the night at Edgware. "We can but loſe the price of our places," cried he calmly; "and, perhaps to-morrow you will be better."

"Never!" ſaid I, ſighing.

"It

"It is doubting the mercy of the Omnipotent to deſpair," ſaid he: "misfortunes are inflicted as mere trials of our patience."

"And mine is exhauſted," interrupted I.

"Time, and the ſtillneſs of ſecluſion from the buſy ſcenes of life, will reſtore your tranquillity," added Mr. Pew: "you will ſtill have reſt—"

"In the grave!" ſaid I.

"I hope on this ſide of it," added Mr. Pew, with a gentleneſs of tone which ſpoke the benignity of his heart. I ſhook my head, but made no anſwer: a pauſe of ſeveral minutes followed.

As we entered Edgware, I firmly reſiſted the propoſal to delay our journey. A new ſucceſſion of ideas ruſhed through my brain, and I every moment became more and more agitated, till we paſſed the houſe where I con-

I concluded Mr. Treville was either dead or dying.

We continued to travel till, before day-break, we arrived at the Parſonage. On entering the houſe I pleaded extreme fatigue, and inſtantly haſtened to my chamber; where, inſtead of repoſing as the tranquil companions of my journey did, I endeavoured to beguile the melancholy hours till breakfaſt in concluding this letter. Alas! Frances, I began it in a ſtate of mind far different from that in which I ſubſcribe myſelf your ill-fated and guilty friend.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.